



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 148 • NUMBER 431 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, June 11, 2019

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, June 11, 2019

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*English*]

OFFICE OF THE TAXPAYERS' OMBUDSMAN

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Taxpayers' Ombudsman annual report, entitled "Breaking Down Barriers to Service".

* * *

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to 25 petitions.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to present, in both official languages, the 31st report of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, entitled "Bus Passenger Safety".

There are some considerable public policy issues found in the facts of this report, and the recommendations certainly bear review, because the obvious answers to bus safety in Canada are not so obvious when looking at the technical issues that are involved. I encourage everyone with an interest in this topic to review this report carefully.

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to table, in both official languages, the 17th report of the Standing Committee on Govern-

ment Operations and Estimates, entitled "Improving the Federal Public Service Hiring Process".

* * *

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-456, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act and the Canada Student Financial Assistance Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to introduce an important bill to Parliament, the post-secondary education financial assistance for persons with disabilities act, with thanks to the hon. member for Windsor—Tecumseh for seconding it.

This legislation will provide tuition-free post-secondary education for all Canadians with disabilities. This bill is a result of the vision of a bright young man from my riding of Vancouver Kingsway, Sanjay Kajal. Sanjay is the 2019 winner of my annual create your Canada contest. He hopes that this bill will help all Canadians with disabilities reach their full potential, by eliminating tuition as a financial barrier to accessing post-secondary education. This is not only fundamentally just, but it is an investment in our citizens. It will level the playing field and help Canadians who need it the most.

I hope that all Parliamentarians will help Sanjay realize his vision for a better Canada.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I move that the 14th report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, presented on Thursday, February 7, 2019, be concurred in.

As I rise today to seek concurrence in the 14th report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, entitled "Supporting Families After the Loss of a Child", I have one message: The time for action is now. It is not time for further debate, for foot-dragging or for fancy political spin. We need action.

Routine Proceedings

We have been presented with a clear solution, a clear path forward. Anything less than action on the part of the government does a disservice to the parents who need our immediate help, our compassion and our assistance.

The journey of Motion No. 110 began about four years ago, when a family in my constituency of Banff—Airdrie reached out to me to share their story and ask for help. It was a story of heartbreak. It is one that has remained firmly imprinted on me. It is one that no parent, no person, should ever have to experience.

Sarah and Lee Cormier welcomed Quinn, a beautiful baby girl, into the world in 2014. Four short months later, heartbreak and grief struck the family when she passed away suddenly in her sleep. While they were experiencing any parent's worst nightmare, the grief, the shock, the pain that comes with that, they were also being forced to deal immediately with cold, heartless, bureaucratic federal government processes.

They would be required to immediately return to work. The parental benefit was cut off on the day Quinn passed. If they did not immediately inform the federal government of the loss and subsequently received payments, they would have been required to repay them. We can well imagine that in that period, this is not the first thing on a person's mind. Repayment would have to be done in person as well, as there is no other way to do it. It cannot be done online or any other way. Notifying the government could not even be done over the phone.

After making many calls to Service Canada, waiting on hold and then explaining their painful story over and over again, they were informed that they were required, in the height of their grief, to drive down to a Service Canada office, stand in line and present their daughter's death certificate.

Lee Cormier testified the following at committee:

Quinn died on December 28. On January 3 we had her funeral and on January 5 we stood in line at Service Canada. The employee told us we were lucky that we didn't have to pay back the next week's benefit. The words she used were 'Your child ceases to exist, so therefore the benefits will cease to exist.'

Let us think about those words and what it would mean to hear them when grieving the loss of a child: "Your child ceases to exist, so therefore the benefits will cease to exist." This is what they were told by a federal government employee. No grieving parent should ever have to experience what the Cormiers did.

Unfortunately, the Cormiers are not alone in their experience of this cold, heartless bureaucratic process. I have heard hundreds of parents with similar stories, who have bravely reached out to me over the last few years to tell me their stories.

An example of that is the heart-wrenching story of an advocate from Nova Scotia named Paula Harmon, who lost her daughter Grace. She was forced to tell her story over and over again to a number of Service Canada officials, and was ultimately sent to a doctor to get a note to be able to qualify for sickness leave. One of the arguments the government has made is that people can qualify for sickness leave.

The reason that the doctor put on the note was "bereavement of daughter". When she presented that note to a federal official, she was told she would be ineligible for benefits. She was told, in a wink-

wink, nudge-nudge way, that if she could get her doctor to put some other reason, she might be able to qualify.

We should also think about the story of Rachel and Rob Samulack from here in Ottawa. Their son, Aaron Isaiah Robert Peters Samulack, was born on June 19, 2016, and spent 100 precious minutes with his family after his birth. He passed away surrounded by love in the arms of his parents.

● (1010)

Rachel and Rob were also forced to tell their heartbreaking story many, many times, to numerous Service Canada agents, in fighting for the benefits to be able to have an opportunity to grieve. Rachel was ultimately forced to return to work well before she was ready to do so.

There is also the story of Gillian Hato from Alberta. She was told by federal officials that she had to go in person to the bank to repay the benefits; she was not able to do that online. There was no other option than to go there in person while she was in the deepest throes of grief. She testified to the committee that she could not bear to go out in public. She was not near ready to do that yet. She was physically ill in the bank parking lot, thinking about the idea of having to go inside to repay those benefits. She was in a small town, and she knew that when she went inside, she would be asked where her newborn baby was.

There is the story of Jens and Kerstin Locher, who lost their son Tobias. Jens testified at committee about this excruciating experience. They went into Service Canada; there was no way they could control the times and the terms of where they had to tell their story. I will quote from his testimony. He stated:

After Tobias died, we had to make arrangements with Service Canada to organize my wife's maternity leave. During this difficult time, we had to leave our safe home where we could hide and venture out into the world to file some paperwork. We had to stand in the open-plan office and explain our situation. Not only that, but several years later...we received a letter from Service Canada stating that we had claimed too much money. It took multiple phone calls and letters over several months to clear up with staff that we had not committed any type of fraud for this overpayment. We had simply requested the time to start immediately after Tobias' death, which was on a weekend, and my wife did not go back to work on Monday.

Due to some system settings, the EI system automatically adjusted the start date from the Monday that we had requested to the Monday of the following week. We didn't pick up on it, and my wife's employer started the week we had requested, so there was this one-week gap. We then had to explain over several months that we were entitled to the 15 weeks but that there was this discrepancy.

Those are just a few of the hundreds of stories that I have heard from grieving parents.

Sometimes, each of us in this place needs to step back from our partisanship and look at things from a purely human lens. This is clearly one of those times. This is not an issue that is partisan; it is an issue of human compassion. It needs to be fixed. Action needs to be taken now. This committee report gives us the solution through its seven recommendations. It gives us the path forward, but the government needs to implement them.

What I have been most surprised with, through the journey of Motion No. 110, is to have been met with all of these hurdles and roadblocks every single step of the way from the Liberal government.

Routine Proceedings

I must give credit to many members of Parliament from all parties who have recognized the importance of taking action on this non-partisan issue: the Liberal members for Lac-Saint-Louis and Central Nova, who both gave impassioned speeches on this topic; the Liberal member for Edmonton Centre, who bravely shared his own personal experience with infant loss in his family at committee; and the NDP member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, who has also been very supportive throughout debate and the committee process.

I also want to thank my Conservative colleagues, the members for Elgin—Middlesex—London, Flamborough—Glanbrook, Yorkton—Melville and Calgary Shepard, who have all been extremely supportive every step of the way through this parliamentary process.

Despite the non-partisan nature of this topic, the first Liberal roadblock came during the very first debate. During that first hour of debate on April 27, 2018, the member for Kanata—Carleton got up and coldly read an obviously cut-and-paste, talking-point speech, which spoke of existing supports, rather than recognizing that there are in fact issues within the system. It appeared at the time that the Liberals were not going to support this motion, and I believe that was the case.

• (1015)

However, there were affected parents watching that day in the gallery who were clearly very disappointed. They were there to hear the Liberal government, which so often preaches about helping parents, yet the Liberals got up and glibly claimed that there was no actual issue here. Instead, they pointed to things they had previously done that had absolutely no impact at all on the issue at hand. There were many parents all across the country who watched that speech, and it was their determination, the thousands of signatures on petitions and hundreds of emails and phone calls to Liberal MPs all across this country urging them to support this motion, that forced the government to have a change of heart.

When it came time for the second reading, the Liberals would only agree to support the motion if I amended the wording of the motion from having the human resources committee be “instructed” to undertake a study to having it say “requested” to undertake a study. Now, this is despite the fact that motions that instruct committees are passed all the time in the House of Commons, but the Liberals were trying to claim that somehow this was improper. I was certainly concerned about that, because I was worried this would be something they would use as a way for the government to get out of having any committee meetings on this motion. However, of course, I was also happy that the Liberals were seeming to have an about-face on this. This issue needed to be studied, and I realize that sometimes one has to put a little water in the wine to be able to get to the finish line. Therefore, on June 8, 2018, Motion No. 110 was passed unanimously in this House, as amended.

Then the “instructed” versus “requested” roadblocks started to come. Because the motion said only “requested”, the Liberal majority members on the committee decided they needed to have only four meetings with witnesses, instead of the six that the motion asked for. Because the motion said only “requested”, the Liberal majority on the committee decided that the report did not need to be tabled by December 8, 2018, the deadline that was asked for in the motion. If this was questioned by anyone at the committee, any

debate was immediately shut down, usually by a motion by the Liberal member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, which was then forced through by the Liberal majority. One of these disgraceful Liberal displays even happened in front of the witnesses who were there to testify. Eventually, the committee report was tabled on February 7, 2019, two full months after it was supposed to have been tabled.

However, there have been further roadblocks in trying to get the Liberal government to actually take action on the recommendations contained in the report. All Liberal MPs voted against the Conservative amendment to the budget implementation act, which would have given grieving parents the 12 weeks of bereavement leave after the loss of a child. That recommendation was actually contained in the committee report. Every other party in the House of Commons supported this amendment.

When Conservative members recently asked for an update on the status of the implementation of the recommendations at the HUMA committee, once again, the Liberal member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge shut down the debate. What is worse is that the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, the one who is responsible for ensuring that these recommendations are implemented, sat there in that committee silently. He could have easily committed to ensuring that all those recommendations were enacted, or even offered an update on what the government was doing, but he sat there silently. Instead, the only response we have from the Liberals and from that minister is a flowery-worded letter in response to the report, three months later, that is not taking any concrete action that the grieving parents need. Instead of saying that we will implement the recommendations, the letter points to past actions and half measures that simply do not address the issue at hand.

This report cannot sit on a shelf and just gather dust. This is a blueprint to ensure that grieving parents do not have to endure hardship or suffer any undue financial or emotional distress as a result of the design of government programming. Grieving parents deserve so much better than what they are getting from the current government. It is becoming increasingly clear that if action is actually going to be taken on this issue, it is not going to be through the Liberal government.

The Liberals have had many opportunities to act. They have been given so many opportunities to do the right thing, and, frankly, they have expended considerable effort in ensuring that nothing actually gets done. While they are trying to appear compassionate, they have actually actively worked to undermine these efforts.

Routine Proceedings

● (1020)

I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of so many parent advocates all across this country, without whose efforts we would never have been able to force the Liberals to even support this motion or to agree to the necessary recommendations in the committee report: people like Sarah and Lee Cormier of Quinn's Legacy Run in my home town; Cheryl Salter-Roberts and Baby Steps Walk to Remember in Edmonton-Sherwood Park; Nancy and Peter Slinn and Nicole Chadwick-Dunning from Empty Cradle BC; Annick Robinson and Cradles for Cuddles; Paula Harmon and Gardens for Grace in Nova Scotia; Jens Locher and October15.ca; Rob and Rachel Samulack, organizers of the Butterfly Run in Ottawa-Gatineau, as well as the organizers of the Butterfly Run in Brockville; Rachael Behie of Nova Scotia and Bria's Band; Jenita Naylor and Hope Box Canada; Michelle Lafontaine and the PAIL Network.

I want to thank all of these courageous advocates and many more like them from across the country. It is their determination that has gotten us this far, and it is their determination that will get this job done.

Now I must ask these advocates to once again demand action. This is a non-partisan issue, and asking for action is not a partisan request. Taking action is the only way forward. Do not fall for lip service. Do not fall for excuses. Only action is acceptable.

We need to get solid commitments from candidates. They need to ask the tough questions. They need to ask Liberal MPs why no real action has been taken when there has been every opportunity to do so. They need to ask for and get solid commitments for the enactment of the recommendations from this report.

Rest assured, when a Conservative government is elected come October, we will take action for grieving parents where the Liberals have failed.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will get the opportunity to address the House more fully on the issue.

I am disappointed at what I have just witnessed. We talk about the parents' advocacy and my heart goes out to those individuals. I appreciate every moment they have put in to advocate on this issue.

What I do not like is the political manipulation of the official opposition to exploit this issue for political purposes. We cannot fool ourselves about the reason the Conservative Party is doing this today. It has nothing to do with those parents, and I find that disgusting. This is a political issue the Conservatives are raising at this time for cheap political purposes. It is called a filibuster.

Why is the Conservative Party using this issue as a way to filibuster in the House, when we were supposed to be debating the free trade agreement between Canada, the U.S. and Mexico? Why is the Conservative Party selectively using grieving parents and those advocates for political purposes?

An hon. member: Do something for the grieving parents.

● (1025)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I am sure the hon. member for Banff—Airdrie is able to answer the question without any assistance.

Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, I cannot tell the House how disgusted I am by what I just heard. The Liberal government has had every opportunity to address these issues, but it put up roadblocks and hurdles all along the way. Then Liberal members get up and make the kind of statements that we just heard. The Liberals had the chance to fix this problem, to show the compassion that these parents and these families deserve, and then that member gets up and tries to make it about political points.

If the Liberals wanted to do something, they could have done it. I demand that action be taken, and so do all of these parents and these families all across the country.

What I just heard is disgusting. I certainly hope that "my heart goes out" does not fool anybody. The Liberals could have done something; they have done nothing. It is time for action.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I disagree with the member for Banff—Airdrie on many issues, but on this issue I absolutely support his bringing this report forward. It has been gathering dust, and it is time that this be now debated and ultimately voted on in the House of Commons.

The mourning that comes from the loss of a child is something indescribable. Parliamentarians should be compelled to vote on this issue and support it. Governments, regardless of their stripe, should be taking action on this.

I must say I was very saddened by the comments from the Liberal member opposite, who tried to turn this into a debate around the Liberal government, as opposed to a debate, which is important to have, about supporting grieving parents when they have the indescribable loss of a child. The Liberal government has tools to sit until midnight. It put in place a whole range of tools.

The member for Banff—Airdrie started a debate today, legitimately, that should be carried on until its conclusion later today. What does it tell us if the Liberals try, through procedural manipulation, to shut down this debate before it is concluded?

Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his support of this motion. I thank all members on this side of the House for their support. What does it mean if the government does not allow the ability for this to be debated and voted on, and for action to be taken on this issue? I think we all know what it means. We have seen it all along the way. We have seen the roadblocks, the hurdles, every attempt by the Liberals to try to somehow look like they care, but do nothing.

I know there is commitment by all the other parties in the House of Commons to do something. If the government actually cares and wants to address these issues, it has the ability to do so. We can have this debate, concur in this report, and then the Liberals can actually take action. Anything less than taking action means nothing. Words mean nothing, but action does, and the government has the ability to do that. It has the ability to support this, and it has the ability to act on the recommendations that have been made. If the Liberals fail to do so, then it is time to replace them with someone who will.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Banff—Airdrie for his advocacy for parents who are mourning and grieving the loss of a child.

Owen Reimer is an individual from my riding. He is a businessman, a financial planner, and he works very hard. His wife, Stephanie, is an X-ray technician. She is also my niece, which makes Owen my nephew. They have one son living with them. They have had three sons die in their arms. I want to acknowledge this morning Kieran, Micah and Tobias, newborns, conceived in their mother's womb, nurtured as a mother would care as best she could, and then to have them born and to cradle them, but to have them pass away in their parents' arms.

This bill would give grieving parents like them the proper time to grieve, without the government making life difficult. What the member for Winnipeg North has done with this outburst, with his yelling and the rant we have just witnessed here, is a poor display of parliamentarianism. I would ask the member for Banff—Airdrie to respond to that.

• (1030)

Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his advocacy on this issue and for saying the names of those children who have been lost. That is one thing I have learned from these families. I did not understand the grieving process and can never identify with it, but I have learned that it is important for them to hear the names of those children and to have the opportunity to grieve.

There are seven recommendations in the report. Some of them are as simple as helping to make sure that Service Canada understands the types of things that I and many of us have learned along the way with this motion, and deals with proper compassion with the families. One of the recommendations is that simple, to make sure that Service Canada agents are given proper training to ensure they can deal with these issues in a compassionate way.

That is the kind of thing the Liberal government is refusing to do. All we have done is ask the Liberals to give us some kind of update on what they have done, and they refuse to even do that. It is that simple. We just need a few changes so parents and families can be dealt with with some compassion by their government. I cannot imagine why anyone in the House would not support that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I wonder if the member across the way is being true with his thoughts and is not trying to play political games. Why would the Conservative Party not use this as an opposition day motion when we could vote on the issue? Why did the opposition party not use this topic yesterday as its opposition day motion? Instead, we get the unholy alliance of the New Democrats and the Conservatives choosing it for political purposes only today.

Will the member commit that a Conservative opposition day motion will deal with this issue?

Mr. Blake Richards: Again, Madam Speaker, we see the kinds of political partisan games being played here. This is just a matter of trying to address an issue for families grieving the loss of a child.

We hear about an unholy alliance, political trickery and all these things. The government has had the chance to address these issues,

no matter how much support there is, and there is support across all other party lines in the House of Commons. That clearly shows this is not a partisan issue.

There is one hurdle to getting this done, and that is the Liberal government. I do not understand why the Liberals want to talk about political trickery and all the rest. They should just deal with it, fix it so these families can grieve the loss of a child and not have to deal with the cold, heartless government bureaucracy while trying to do so. Why does the member not spend some of his time doing that rather than all of these games?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, individuals watching what is taking place this morning should be aware that there are numerous concurrence reports from standing committees. The Conservatives chose this report on this day, not because they genuinely care about the issue. Rather, they are using the issue as a way to filibuster. That is the truth and the reality of it.

I would challenge any member of the Conservative Party to come to Winnipeg North and tell my constituents differently in any sort of public forum. The Conservatives will never take me up on that. I asked the member opposite if the Conservatives would use this issue as an opposition day motion. They will not do that either.

This is being brought forward for political partisan reasons. On this side of the House, we will not support that. If the member across the way wants to challenge me on that, I will go to his riding and have an open public meeting to challenge him on why this was introduced today.

I will not be fooled by this. I have been a parliamentarian for almost 30 years. This is a critically important issue. Yes, it has been in committee. We have a government that is very sensitive to it and has taken specific action with respect to it.

Having said that, I move:

That the House do now proceed to orders of the day.

• (1035)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those in favour of the motion will please say ye.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

Routine Proceedings

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Call in the members.

• (1115)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 1348)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Arya
Ayoub	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baylis	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Caesar-Chavannes
Carr	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chen
Cormier	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Fergus
Finnigan	Fisher
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Freeland	Fuhr
Garneau	Gerretsen
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Hajdu
Hardie	Harvey
Hébert	Hehr
Hogg	Holland
Housefather	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Joly	Jordan
Jowhari	Khalid
Khera	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Monsef	
Morneau	Morrissey
Murray	Nassif
Nault	Ng
O'Connell	Oliphant
Oliver	O'Regan
Ouellette	Paradis
Peterson	Petitpas Taylor
Picard	Ratansi
Rioux	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Rudd
Ruimy	Rusnak
Sahota	Saini
Sajjan	Samson
Scarpaleggia	Schieffe
Serré	Sgro

Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Simms
Sorbara
Tabbara
Tassi
Vandal
Virani
Wilkinson
Yip
Zahid— 157

Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sohi
Spengemann
Tan
Trudeau
Vandenbeld
Weir
Wrzesnewskyj
Young

NAYS

Members

Abouttaif	Albas
Albrecht	Alleslev
Allison	Anderson
Arnold	Aubin
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergen	Bezan
Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Block	Boucher
Brassard	Brousseau
Calkins	Cannings
Caron	Carrie
Choquette	Christopherson
Clarke	Davidson
Doherty	Dreeshen
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseault	Duval
Eglsinski	Falk (Provencher)
Finley	Fortin
Gallant	Garrison
Généreux	Genius
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Hardcastle	Harder
Hoback	Hughes
Jeneroux	Julian
Kelly	Kent
Kitchen	Kusie
Lake	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lukiwski	MacGregor
MacKenzie	Maguire
Manly	Martel
Masse (Windsor West)	Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Moore	Motz
Nater	Nicholson
Paul-Hus	Paupé
Poillievre	Quach
Ramsey	Rayes
Reid	Richards
Saroya	Schmale
Shields	Shipley
Sorenson	Stanton
Stetski	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Trost	Van Kesteren
Vecchio	Viersen
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Wong	Yurdiga
Zimmer— 105	

PAIRED

Members

Fry	Goldsmith-Jones
Kmieciak	LeBlanc
Plamondon	Thériault— 6

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

CANADA–UNITED STATES–MEXICO AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (for the Right Honourable Prime Minister) moved that Bill C-100, An Act to implement the Agreement between Canada, the United States of America and the United Mexican States, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I want to start by acknowledging that we are meeting on the traditional territory of the Algonquin people.

I am pleased to rise in the House today to support Bill C-100, the new NAFTA implementation act.

Because of its size and geography, Canada has always been a trading nation. Exports are the very bedrock of our economy and account for fully one third of our GDP. Imports supply our businesses, fuel our production and meet consumers' needs. Naturally, for geographic reasons, a significant proportion of those exports and imports are with our biggest trading partner, the United States.

The vast majority of them cross the border tariff-free because of our North American free trade agreement. The region covered by this North American free trade agreement is now the largest economic region in the world. Together, Canada, the United States and Mexico account for a quarter of the world's GDP, with just 7% of the global population. We exchange goods, services, investment and people in a growing market that now encompasses 486 million consumers and is worth some \$22 trillion U.S.

[English]

Every day, more than two billion dollars' worth of trade and investment move back and forth between Canada and the United States. Our continental supply chains have strengthened North America's ability to compete and to succeed in the global marketplace, and we benefit from that strength here in Canada.

This successful trading arrangement was the foundation upon which we built the agreement being debated here today, and I am pleased to be here to speak in support of the new NAFTA.

When the U.S. administration announced that it would seek to renegotiate NAFTA, we saw an opportunity to update, modernize and improve a trade agreement that was already a strong foundation for North American commerce. We knew that in order to be effective, it was critical that we present a united front and speak for all Canadians in our negotiation.

We came to the negotiating table united as a country. Throughout our intense negotiations, we stayed focused on what matters most to Canadians: jobs, growth and expanding the middle class. We knew these priorities were Canadians' priorities because we spoke with Canadians, industry, agriculture and labour across the country. We sought advice and insight across party lines and asked current and former politicians, including many premiers and mayors, for their help in shaping Canada's priorities and in championing them.

Government Orders

Crucially, we created a NAFTA advisory council, which counted among its members former politicians from the NDP and the Conservatives, as well as business leaders, labour leaders, agricultural leaders and indigenous leaders.

I would like to pause here to thank the council for the excellent work it has done and continues to do on behalf of our great country.

I would also like to thank Canadians from all across the country, especially from business, labour, agriculture, politicians of all stripes, premiers and mayors for their hard work on the new NAFTA. This was a true team Canada effort, and I am so proud of the way our whole country approached these sometimes difficult negotiations.

I also want to thank my hon. colleagues throughout this House for their advocacy and insight throughout this process. So many of them have been integral to our work.

● (1120)

Throughout the negotiation, we kept our cool in the face of uncertainty and worked on getting a new agreement that would preserve jobs and market access, and in turn, support the middle class and economic growth. We held firm. We held out for a good deal, and that is what we have today.

[Translation]

I would be remiss if I failed to note that a major obstacle remained even after the agreement was signed in Buenos Aires last November: the United States' unjust and illegal section 232 tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum.

When the United States imposed the tariffs, Canada immediately took retaliatory measures by imposing counter-tariffs. Canada stood its ground, asserting that the tariffs were inappropriate between two countries that not only are key national security allies but also have a free trade agreement. We made that clear to the American administration, members of Congress, union leaders and business leaders south of the border. We also made it clear that it would be very difficult to ratify the new agreement as long as the tariffs remained in place.

On May 17, we succeeded in getting the steel and aluminum tariffs eliminated.

*Government Orders**[English]*

As I said when I recently met with workers in Regina and in Saguenay, here is why we have succeeded in getting those tariffs lifted. We knew the facts were on our side. We knew that Canada did not represent a national security threat to the United States. We knew our trade with the United States in steel is balanced and reciprocal. We stayed united. We were patient. We persevered, and in the end, we prevailed.

Now that the tariffs have been fully lifted, we are ready to move forward with the ratification of the new NAFTA. Our aim was to preserve Canada's preferential access to our largest and closest market, and that is what we achieved. This is essential for our businesses, our entrepreneurs, our farmers, and for the millions of jobs and all the middle-class families across Canada who rely on a strong trade relationship with our neighbour.

We succeeded in preserving key elements of NAFTA, including chapter 19, the all-important dispute settlement mechanism. No trading relationship is ever without irritants. In the case of the Canada-U.S. relationship, we are aware of the importance of maintaining an effective mechanism to settle disputes. For us, this was non-negotiable.

- (1125)

[Translation]

Over the years, we have used dispute settlement mechanisms many times to make impartial decisions for Canadian industry and workers, particularly in the case of softwood lumber.

We also protected the cultural exception. Canada's cultural industries provide more than 650,000 jobs across the country. Beyond this vital economic role, they are integral to our ability to maintain a strong sense of national identity, tell our stories and express our culture in all of its diversity. By preserving this exception, we will ensure that Canadian culture is protected and that our unique linguistic and cultural identity will not be jeopardized.

[English]

NAFTA is an agreement that is a quarter of a century old. In preparing for this negotiation, we heard from Canadian exporters that there were a lot of bread-and-butter issues preventing them from taking full advantage of the deal. We heard what Canadian businesses needed and we responded.

The new NAFTA includes important updates that will modernize our deal for the 21st century and simplify life for Canadian exporters. In fact, in our consultations before the start of the negotiations, we found that about 40% of Canadians doing business with the U.S. did not bother to use their NAFTA preferences at all. It is a stunning number. The new NAFTA will make life easier for business people on both sides of the border by cutting red tape and harmonizing regulations.

Our job as a government is to safeguard economic gains and prevent economic threats. That is what we have done through this modernized agreement.

Consider Canada's automotive sector, which contributes \$19 billion to our country's annual GDP. This is a sector that directly

employs more than 125,000 people with an additional 400,000 jobs created in after-market services and dealership networks. Unfair tariffs on Canadian cars and car parts would threaten our economy and hundreds of thousands of well-paying jobs and the families they support. Canada was able to negotiate a gold-plated insurance policy for Canadian automobiles and auto parts, protecting our industry from future potential section 232 tariff measures by the U.S. on cars and car parts. This provides added stability and predictability for the car sector and reaffirms Canada as an attractive investment destination.

In addition, the new NAFTA's rules of origin chapter addresses automotive manufacturing wages in North America by including a labour value content requirement. This means that a percentage of the value of a tariff-free NAFTA vehicle must be produced by workers earning at least \$16 U.S. an hour. This is a provision that should help level the playing field for Canadian workers.

The new agreement seeks to improve labour standards and working conditions in all three countries. The labour chapter contains key provisions that support fair and inclusive trade, such as enforceable obligations to address issues related to migrant workers, forced or compulsory labour and violence against union members. It promotes increased trade and investment opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses through the small business chapter.

Perhaps one of the achievements I am most proud of is that the investor-state dispute resolution system, which in the past allowed foreign companies to sue Canada, will be gone. This means that Canada can make its own rules about public health and safety, for example, without the risk of being sued. Known as ISDS, this provision has cost Canadian taxpayers more than \$300 million in penalties and legal fees.

Over the past 25 years, North American trade in agriculture and agri-food products has nearly quadrupled. Canada and the U.S. enjoy one of the largest agricultural trading relationships in the world. It is worth more than \$48 billion U.S. a year. Under this new agreement, Canadian exporters will continue to benefit, including new market access for Canadian exports of refined sugar, sugar-containing products, and margarine. This is significant for our farmers and our food industry.

Government Orders

• (1130)

[Translation]

Importantly, the agreement preserves and maintains Canada's system of supply management for dairy, poultry and egg products, despite strong attempts by the U.S. to dismantle it. While the new NAFTA introduces a specific amount of liberalization of market access, the future of supply management itself—production control, pricing mechanisms and import controls—is not in doubt. To mitigate the impact of these changes, the government will compensate producers for any loss of market share and work with them to further strengthen their industry.

Our shared North American environment is vital to our economic prosperity. The new NAFTA will ensure that our trading partners do not gain an unfair competitive advantage by failing to enforce their environmental laws. It also includes a new environment chapter, subject to the same dispute settlement mechanism, to help uphold air quality and fight marine pollution.

[English]

We secured a general exception related to the rights of indigenous peoples. We have ensured that the environment chapter recognizes the important role of indigenous peoples in conservation, sustainable fisheries and forest management.

The new labour chapter includes a non-discrimination clause for employment and occupation, and addresses barriers to the full participation of women in the workforce.

We also ensured that LBGQ2 individuals are supported. In fact, the new NAFTA is the first international trade deal that recognizes gender identity and sexual orientation as grounds for discrimination in its labour chapter.

In renewing and modernizing NAFTA, it is important to underscore the importance of our long-standing and mutually beneficial trade relationship with the United States. Our relationship is special and enduring because of our geography and history. It is special and enduring because of our close business, family and personal ties. It has been a significant contributor to jobs, economic growth and prosperity in both countries.

Our partnership with Mexico is critically important as well, and the new NAFTA will ensure that the trilateral North American relationship remains mutually beneficial for years to come.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank United States trade representative Ambassador Bob Lighthizer; the former Mexican secretary of the economy, Ildefonso Guajardo; his successor, the current Mexican Secretary of the Economy, Graciela Márquez; and Mexican Undersecretary Jesús Seade. All of us worked hard together, and in the end, we achieved a win-win-win deal for our three countries.

With regard to ratification, insofar as it is possible, we intend to move in tandem with our partners. I am in very close contact with my counterparts in both countries as we discuss our domestic ratification processes.

Our government's purpose is to create the conditions to grow a stronger middle class and improve opportunities for all Canadians.

That is what we have achieved with the new NAFTA, and this is something all Canadians can be proud of.

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Madam Speaker, the minister is talking about ratification. I would ask her to talk in a little more detail about what that may look like here in Canada, given what is going on in the U.S. right now. The Democrats do not seem that eager to move forward with ratification. What is the thought process of the government when it comes to ratification? Is this something we are looking at doing before we leave here for the summer? Given the fact that we are here for only two more weeks, it does not sound like we are in lockstep with the U.S. Is it something the government would consider calling Parliament back in the summertime to ratify?

• (1135)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, the NAFTA negotiations themselves, as my colleague knows, was a trilateral process, with three governments working together. The domestic ratification process is about the domestic processes in each sovereign country.

Our view is that first, it is very important for us to focus on our own domestic ratification process, just as each of our partners will be focusing on their domestic ratification processes. We are very clear that just as I do not think anyone in the House would appreciate Americans or Mexicans coming to Canada and opining on our domestic ratification process, we feel that it is inappropriate for us to opine on the ratification processes in our NAFTA partner countries.

Having said that, we also believe that the best outcome for Canada is to have a process that, as far as possible, moves in tandem with our partners. That requires a lot of close collaboration. I am in fact travelling to Washington tomorrow, where I will meet with Ambassador Lighthizer and with members of Congress to get a little more insight into the U.S. domestic ratification process and share some perspectives on our own legislative process, which can be mysterious to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Essex.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Madam Speaker, only the Liberals could describe something as a win-win-win that would raise the cost of medications for all Canadians, and frankly, for everyone in all three countries. We know that there is an effort afoot in the U.S. right now to remove this regressive provision, which the Liberals apparently do not want to go along with, for some reason.

When we talk about raising the cost of drugs, this goes against everything Canadians are calling for right now. Right now we have one of the highest costs in the world for drugs. I am talking about biologics, insulin, medications for Crohn's disease and treatment for people with rheumatoid arthritis. Why exactly have the Liberals agreed to increase the cost of medications and give big pharma exactly what it was looking for in this new deal?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Essex for her hard work on this agreement. I just want to be very clear that reopening this agreement would be opening a Pandora's box.

Government Orders

All Canadians saw how difficult, at times, this negotiation was. They saw the very difficult demands that were put on the table and that Canada, with real resilience, managed to resist, demands like getting rid of chapter 19, demands like getting rid of the cultural exemption and demands like a U.S. national content requirement for the car sector, which would have been devastating to the member's constituents. We worked really hard, and we got a deal that resisted those demands.

It would be foolhardy, it would be toying with the lives and jobs of Canadians, to reopen this negotiation, and we will not.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I come from Surrey—Newton in British Columbia, I want to commend the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs for her strong leadership in getting this deal done.

I would like to ask the minister this. How is this new agreement going to help British Columbians?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his hard work on this agreement and for the very many conversations we have had about it. I also want to take this opportunity to thank the provincial government of British Columbia, which was a very important and very constructive partner in this negotiation.

I would like to particularly, actually, give a shout-out to the Premier of British Columbia. There were a couple of difficult moments when I was in Washington, and he sent me some reassuring text messages. I want to take this opportunity to say to the premier that that meant a lot.

I think the reason our B.C. caucus, the government of B.C. and mayors in B.C. were so supportive was that British Columbia is a province that understands how important trade is, how important trade is for the softwood lumber industry in B.C. and how important trade is for the city of Vancouver.

• (1140)

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Madam Speaker, I am very happy to see that the proportionality clause has been eliminated from NAFTA. I am glad to see that the investor-state dispute settlement provisions, ISDS, have been eliminated as well. I would like to see ISDS removed from all our trade agreements and from our FIPA agreements, specifically from the Canada—China FIPA, which the Conservatives passed without a vote in the House of Commons. These agreements are detrimental to our sovereignty and to our democratic authority in this place.

I am disappointed about the provisions for extending patents. I am also disappointed about the provisions for allowing American dairy to come into Canada. I wonder if the minister could explain how dairy will be labelled and what we will do about BGH, bovine growth hormone, in milk from the United States.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, let me start by thanking the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith for his question. I think it is one of the first questions he has asked in the House, and it is nice to be having this conversation.

I am also grateful to the member for raising the question of the proportionality clause, or the ratchet clause, which bound Canada to sell a certain proportion of its energy exports to the United States.

This is a clause that is gone, and I think that is another real victory for Canada.

I share the member's view, as I said in my comments, that getting rid of ISDS in our trading relationship with the United States is another real win for Canada. As I mentioned, ISDS has cost Canadians more than \$300 million, and it has had, academics believe, a regulatory chilling effect in terms of our own ability to regulate for health, safety, the environment and so on.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Madam Speaker, I want to go back to something the minister said about opening Pandora's box. In the United States, there are good examples of times when trade agreements have been opened. In fact, in May 2007, the House Democrats, under Ms. Pelosi, did just that. They opened four existing trade agreements. They were very targeted. They went after specific things, and not with the fearmongering of the Liberals today about a Pandora's box. It was actually a precedent for doing exactly what they are trying to achieve right now.

There is no rush to ratify this agreement. The U.S. has not even put this on the floor of its Congress. It has not taken one step towards it, to be honest.

I saw Ms. Pelosi last week, and she assured me that it will not happen until they can come to an understanding on labour, on the environment and on removing the patent extension for drugs.

I am quite encouraged by the work that is happening in the States. I am shocked that the Liberals do not want to be part of this. Why are the Liberals rushing ratification through and not standing up for progressive trade?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, let me correct my hon. colleague on a point of fact. The U.S. has, in fact, taken a couple of initial steps to begin the clock on the ratification process. That work has begun.

I am absolutely clear, as I believe are the overwhelming majority of Canadians, that we do not want and we do not need a new NAFTA negotiation. Canada has done its work. We have our deal. We are not going to create an opportunity to have this hard-won agreement, with gains for Canada preserving our market access, put in jeopardy.

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Madam Speaker, as has been mentioned before by my colleague from the NDP, I would caution the government to move prudently on this. We have already seen the Democrats not wanting to give Mr. Trump any kind of victory. Therefore, we have not seen a lot of co-operation from the U.S. If we get too far ahead of ourselves regarding ratification, that could be an issue. Therefore, I would echo the comments of my colleague from the NDP that as a result of the uncertainty we see in the U.S., we need to be cautious as we move forward with ratification.

The government's legislation aims to implement the Canada-United States agreement. The government is calling it by its acronym CUSMA. The bill would reaffirm key NAFTA provisions, but it would also introduce new conditions on Canadian trade and economic strategy.

Government Orders

Mexico and especially the United States are Canada's natural trading partners. A framework agreement that governs trade and other commercial issues between all three countries is essential.

I would like to state from the beginning that the Conservatives will support the speedy ratification of CUSMA's implementing legislation. However, having said that, it is also important to say that the deal and how it came to be is not without significant flaws.

In the beginning of negotiations, the Prime Minister pushed an agenda, including issues that were not on the radar of the Americans whatsoever. This nearly derailed the whole deal. It was very similar to what the Prime Minister did just months before negotiations of the trans-Pacific partnership with his erratic behaviour. The government pushed non-trade-related matters, which seemed to irritate the Americans, instead of seeking to find common ground on priorities and mutual interests.

As a result of taking that type of tactic to negotiations, the Americans negotiated most of the steel provisions with the Mexicans and then brought Canada in at the eleventh hour to deal with some of the remaining issues that had not been dealt with. We had an opportunity to be at the table with our most important and significant trading partner, but we were talking about issues the Americans did not want to talk about. As a result, they decided that since we did not want to talk about trade and NAFTA, they would talk to Mexico. We should think about the implications of that. We were not even at the table at the time the agreement came into effect. That speaks volumes to how the government handled this process.

As I said before, of course the Conservatives are going to support the bill. We reached out to stakeholders. I had a chance, like some of my colleagues, to talk to stakeholders across the country. They said that they needed certainty, that they needed a deal. There was no question about that. However, the concern is that the Liberal government talks about what a great deal it is, but that is definitely not the case as we move forward. What stakeholders and people have told us is that a deal is better than no deal. That is why Conservatives will be supporting the bill.

The government did not fight for our own interests. Let us think about that. It talked about the interests that were important to the Liberal Party and its political brand. The Liberals were focused on non-trade issues instead of worrying about the national interests of Canadians.

Let us consider auto manufacturing, agriculture and lumber. After four years, we still do not have a softwood lumber deal. I do not even know if the conversation has been brought up. Despite our many interests, which include auto manufacturing, agriculture, lumber and prescription drugs, the Prime Minister represents his own political interests. That should be very concerning for Canadians.

In addition, during the negotiations, the Americans decided to impose devastating steel and aluminum tariffs for close to a year. This was after months of them asking the Liberals to fix the loopholes that allowed steel dumping into the United States via Canada.

Now we have a bill before us that does not put safeguards in place. The Americans asked us to do this four years ago, but because the Liberals decided it was not important, we ended up with steel and

aluminum tariffs. For years our manufacturing sector was under a bunch of uncertainty. We saw our jobs move to the states and a number of other things. Only now are the Liberals reacting. It is almost as though they created the crisis so they could point out they fixed it. That is what Canadians should really understand.

Canadian businesses and producers are still reeling after this very difficult period. The imposition of these very avoidable tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum have served to erode our competitiveness and have impacted thousands across the supply chain. The Liberals announced a \$2-billion assistance package for the steel and aluminum sector, but almost none of this money has gone to the workers.

I talked to a number of businesses the other day. They said that before steel and aluminum tariffs were lifted, there was a big push from the government to get their applications in and it wanted to work with them. Then, all of a sudden, there was radio silence.

● (1145)

Are all those companies left holding the bag with respect to not having money and not having access or is the government going to follow through? It is easy to announce and reannounce programs. It is more difficult to ensure the money gets out the door. This is a huge issue. The reality is that these tariffs were avoidable. There was no reason for those steel and aluminum tariffs and the pain that our manufacturing sector has had to endure over the last couple of years.

Once again, the Liberals talk about all the money that has been collected, which I believe almost \$2 billion. My point is that very few businesses have received any money. We studied this at committee for quite some time. Company after company said that the application process was difficult and that was hard to figure out how to make this thing work. They also said that they were not getting money. Once again, the announcement talked about the money, but the proof was whether the companies had the kind of help they required, and that was not the case.

This was all avoidable if the government had acted when the Americans asked it to close the loophole that allowed cheap and dumped steel to flood the American market, using Canada as a transit country.

The Liberals have lurched from crisis to crisis on trade and tariffs. They have been constantly out of step with Canadian workers and manufacturers. The government's negotiations of CUSMA also delivered no progress on buy American provisions with respect to government procurement.

Another issue we have not talked about is buy American. It is concerning for our Canadian manufacturers. Are they going to have the ability to access some of those things? It is a major blow to Canadian businesses and jobs across the country.

The Liberals also made concessions on the Canadian supply-managed agriculture sector, which the foreign affairs minister deemed to be key to our national interests. The Americans did not budge when it came to their use of agriculture subsidies. As a matter of fact, we have seen the subsidies grow over the last number of months.

Government Orders

The government and the Prime Minister also made key concessions on intellectual property, which will see provinces burdened with higher costs for biological drugs.

The government also restricted future trade deals, with unparalleled provisions granting Americans an indirect veto over Canadian trade partners. Think about this for one second. This is an issue of sovereignty. While the U.S. negotiates trade deals with China, basically it has told us that we need to get its permission if we want to move forward on any deal with China. This is huge. This was not discussed a whole lot in the general public, but has long-term consequences for our ability to do our job as Canadians and get our products to market.

I will give credit where credit is due. One of the major achievements was to preserve chapter 19, the dispute resolution provisions. The minister mentioned that. It is fair to say that it was a concern if we did not have an independent third party to look at some of our challenges. Therefore, I will give credit to the Liberals on that one, but that will probably be it right now. However, that was definitely important.

A trade deal is judged by what one has gained from the negotiations. In this deal, compared to previous versions, Canada lost a number of key sectors and gained absolutely nothing. However, the Liberals go on tour around the country like they are some kind of heroes and it makes no sense. They have lost ground from previous governments. We do not talk about it as a save, but it could have been a lot worse. However, to travel around the country and say somehow this is an amazing deal for Canadians is just not true.

It has been very clear from the beginning that the Liberal government was unprepared to renegotiate the NAFTA deal. When the negotiations started, the Liberals kept stumbling and in the end, they were forced to take a deal where they lost on many fronts.

As I mentioned earlier, we will support the bill because it is essential to provide our businesses and producers with certainty. We have heard that on the ground. They have also suffered enough under the government. The Liberals have mismanaged the economy and trade. They have created a lot of uncertainty as we move forward.

Another thing we need to point out is that last year the U.S. grew its economy by 3.2%. That was after a government shutdown for the first quarter. In 2018, when the government was shut down for a large part of the first quarter in which it only had 2% growth, it still was able to notch up growth of over 3.2%.

• (1150)

We need to compare our record with that. In the last quarter of 2018, we saw growth at 0.3%. This quarter it was 0.4%, which is not quite a third of that of the U.S. The U.S. economy is on fire right now and the best we can muster is a growth of 0.4%, with all the money we are spending and all the deficits we are creating. The comparative is important to understand.

In order to compete with the United States and Mexico, our business environment needs to be more competitive or else we are setting up our businesses to fail in the face of strong competition from our counterparts to the south.

How is Canada doing with respect to competitiveness? The government has managed to make things worse on this front as well.

Let us start with the most important mistake first, and that is the carbon tax. First, let us just get this out of the way in the beginning. The carbon tax is not an environmental plan; it is a tax plan. It will do nothing for the environment. The Liberals are fully aware of this and Canadians know it as well.

The Liberal carbon tax is not a plan to lower emissions. It is just another cash grab, which is hurting already overtaxed Canadians. Small businesses and their employers are already being overtaxed. The Liberals have increased CPP and EI premiums. They have increased personal income tax rates for entrepreneurs. They have made changes to the small business tax rate that will disqualify thousands of local businesses.

Dan Kelly, president of Canadian Federation of Independent Business, said:

Many small businesses want to take action on climate change, but the carbon tax is putting them further behind. In fact, 71 per cent have told us that the carbon tax makes it harder for them to make further investments to reduce their emissions.

Seventy-one per cent of small businesses have said that the carbon tax makes it harder for them to make further investments to reduce their emissions. What more proof does the government need, when the ill-advised carbon tax makes no impact on the environment and makes our businesses uncompetitive.

Last Friday, the Canadian Press reported that the average carbon tax rebate Canadians received in 2018 was significantly lower than the amount the Liberals had claimed they would receive. When announcing the carbon tax rebate program, the Liberals established the average payment would be \$248 in New Brunswick, \$307 in Ontario, \$336 in Manitoba, and \$598 in Saskatchewan. However, the actual average rebates have been much lower: \$171 in New Brunswick, \$203 in Ontario, \$231 in Manitoba and \$422 in Saskatchewan.

Like the Prime Minister himself, these carbon tax rebates are simply not as advertised. The Liberals continue to cover up the true costs of the carbon tax. They still have not told Canadians how much more it will cost them for everyday essentials, like groceries, gasoline and home heating.

With less money being returned to Canadians, they will have even less money in their pockets, thanks to the Prime Minister and his Liberal carbon tax. The Liberal carbon tax will go up, if he is re-elected in October. Environment Canada is already planning for \$300 per tonne, which is 15 times more expensive than it is today.

Make no mistake, a Conservative government will scrap the carbon tax, leave more money in the pockets of Canadians, let them get ahead and allow our businesses to stay competitive.

Government Orders

How else is the government making Canada's business environment uncompetitive? It is a good question, because Canada recently fell to the lowest spot ever in competitiveness. Canada has fallen out of the top 10 in a ranking of the world's most competitive economies. We are now 13th. Let us think about that. In an age where we are competing with one of the largest and most successful economies in the world, the U.S., which is ranked at number three, not only are we not in the top 10 anymore, we have dropped to 13th.

Competitiveness drives our economy. It helps us to compete when we have deals and when we try to move our goods and services across the border. This will only continue to make it tougher for Canadians to succeed financially in the coming years.

As I mentioned, the United States is number three. We are trying to compete with the world's biggest economy and it is tough when we see it use tax reform and regulation reform. What we are doing is making it more difficult for Canada to compete as a country.

If we look at the other things that are going on right now, and some of the things we talk about when it comes to competitiveness, there is the whole issue of pipelines. We have tanker moratoriums and things like that.

• (1155)

Let us think about that. In a day and age when the U.S. is building more pipelines, we have bills like Bill C-69. I noticed in the paper this morning that six premiers have come together to say that if something is not done, this is going to create a potential national unity crisis. In terms of the investment that we have chased from this country, it is almost \$100 billion in energy investment.

Let us look at the things we are doing. We have a country south of the border that is looking for ways to reduce regulation and red tape. We have a government here that is barely chugging along in terms of its GDP. As I said, it is 0.3% in the last quarter and 0.4% in this quarter. That is without the new rules in this legislation that is before the House right now.

If we look at bills like Bill C-69, which is to increase the regulatory reform when it comes to pipelines, and Bill C-48, where we are trying to get our goods to market around the world, this is one more thing that makes us uncompetitive as we move forward. One of the things we need to be on guard against is that as the U.S. and countries around the world are reducing and streamlining regulation, we are making these things more difficult.

We need to look at what we are doing as a country. Trade deals are important. The U.S. is extremely important as a partner. As I said before, stakeholders have told us that it is more important to have a bad deal in place, for certainty, than it is to have no deal at all. Therefore, as we move forward on these issues, one of the things we need to be talking about is not just the trade deals we have right now, but how we are going to become more competitive in the future.

Looking at the kind of money we are spending on deficits, the current government has racked up almost \$80 billion in deficit spending, and yet we have very little to show for it when we start talking about GDP growth and some of these things. There was the tax on small businesses that we experienced two or three summers ago. How are these things helpful in terms of making us more competitive?

As I look at what is going on around the world, I believe we are heading in the wrong direction. I believe we should be doing much better, given the fact that the U.S. economy is on fire south of the border. Yes, we need to do other things, like work on how we can get our goods and services across interprovincial borders and a number of these things. However, one of the things we need to constantly work on is how we streamline to reduce the burdens that business owners have to deal with.

In looking at this bill before us today, we realize that it would create some certainty for some businesses. In the long term, the challenge will be how we deal with this issue in terms of competitiveness. How do we deal with the issue that we need to do a better job of getting our goods and services to market? How do we deal with the issues of trade infrastructure in this country?

When we were in government, we spent a number of dollars on trade infrastructure, as it was very important to us. We have not seen a whole lot of money go out the door in terms of infrastructure. There has been some talk about an infrastructure bank, and yet in the three or four years, there has been very little money flowing out the door. We have somewhere in the neighbourhood of almost \$80 billion in deficit spending and we do not have a lot to show for it.

Sure, we have more programs, but at the end of the day, what do Canadians feel about that? I would say that Canadians are not feeling that they are any better off. As a matter of fact, we have seen it reported in the press that Canadians are feeling the pressure, in terms of what they have to take home at the end of every month.

As we move forward, these trade deals are important, but we have to continually focus on competitiveness here at home. We have to figure out ways that we can reduce taxes, reduce regulations and streamline the process, and then we can move in a direction that helps us to compete around the world. We have a great opportunity, with what is going on around the world right now, to attract the best and the brightest. I would encourage the government to continue to move in that direction. I can assure members that when we have the opportunity to form government in October, some of the things we are going to be looking at are how we become more competitive as a country and how we compete with the U.S. and other countries around the world.

In closing, the Conservatives will be supporting this deal. However, we have some concerns with how it was handled. We have concerns with some of the crises that were created that we believe did not need to happen. We will do our best to try to fix these things when we are elected with a strong, stable Conservative government in October of this year.

• (1200)

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member had been allowed a prop, he might have waved a white flag part way through that speech.

I appreciate the member's support for the binational dispute resolution mechanism in chapter 19 being preserved. However, of all of the other things we have accomplished, I wonder which is his favourite.

Government Orders

Is it protecting the cultural exception, preserving supply management, increasing market access for refined sugar and margarine, ensuring gender and sexual orientation protections? Is it making the environmental chapter subject to a trade dispute mechanism? Is it the rules of origin that benefit auto workers? Could it be the new small business chapter, removing ISDS that prevents government from making policy in the public interest? Is it removing the oil ratchet issue?

Which of all of those accomplishments would be the member's personal favourite?

• (1205)

Mr. Dean Allison: Mr. Speaker, as my colleague mentioned before, I already mentioned my favourite one, which is chapter 19. I am going to leave it at that.

As I said, there was an opportunity right from the start for the government not to insert itself in the process. I really believe that at the end of the day, when Mr. Trump was concerned with tariffs, what he was really concerned about was China. If we look at what has happened recently with his involvement with China, when he was talking about unfair practices, I do not believe that was ever directed at us.

It was mentioned by the minister, when she spoke earlier, that they welcomed the opportunity to jump into this thing. As a government, Conservatives would have done things differently. We would have been down there right away. We would have said that in terms of some of the issues around China, the issue is not one that they were targeting us on, but they were targeting other people around the world for their unfair practices. We would have been in there and had a conversation. We would have dealt with this in a way that it would not have formed a crisis manufactured by ourselves that then had to be fixed.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk a bit about supply management, which was mentioned in my colleague's speech. We have really undermined Canada's dairy sector in this deal. Certainly, there were moves toward that in CETA and in CPTPP, and we have now opened up 10% of the market.

However, that is not all that we have done. We also have a provision in the new CUSMA that will grant U.S. oversight into the administration of the Canadian dairy system, which farmers say undermines our sovereignty. The member mentioned other pieces which are undermining to our sovereignty, such as the fact that we now need permission from the U.S. to enter into trade negotiations with certain countries.

On dairy in particular, in the egregious things that have happened, we actually agreed to a lower amount of export than we exported in the previous year. There are some strange things that have happened to dairy. It is not just opening the market access.

To be honest, I am a bit baffled by the Conservatives' position on this. They have raised all of the issues that we are raising over here regarding things that are not good for Canadians and, in this case, Canadian farmers.

Does the member support these changes to dairy that were given up, these concessions in the deal, and if he does not, then why are Conservatives supporting the deal?

Mr. Dean Allison: Mr. Speaker, we have worked on a number of files as they relate to trade and all these things. As I mentioned before in my remarks, there has been a lot of discussion back and forth in the Conservative caucus regarding their support and non-support. I had a chance to talk to stakeholders last summer. I spoke to over 150 myself, and I had a number of other colleagues who were on the road speaking to individuals as well. By and large, all those people said to me that we needed to make sure we had a deal done. The context in which they said that was in eliminating the steel and aluminum tariffs.

When we signed the deal, which the Prime Minister said he would not sign unless steel and aluminum tariffs were done, and that he went ahead and signed anyway, the reality is that businesses needed certainty. Therefore, we were challenged, as the member mentioned. There are a number of issues that we have concerns with. Supply management is certainly one of those issues, in terms of the fact that we have given up the right to export some of the proteins, etc. However, there is also the fact that they have put provisions on what we are able to do in dealing with a non-market economy, or in this case, China.

That will be a bigger issue in terms of sovereignty as we get down the road. The U.S. has said that if it does not like the deal we create that it can deal with this new deal itself, and that will cause problems.

At the end of the day, we are challenged. We realize that this deal is not a good deal. However, it is what stakeholders, businesses and people have told us they need in order to have certainty so they can move forward with their relationships with the U.S.

• (1210)

Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, whom I share time with on the Standing Committee on International Trade, for his speech today. Over the last 15 years, we have not seen a significant growth of companies that have been trading internationally. Over the 10 years of the former Harper government, it was roughly 12% to 15%. We saw an increase in trade, but we are not seeing an increase in trade with the small to medium-sized exporters. In fact, I represent a riding in Atlantic Canada where 54% of businesses have one to four employees.

What did my colleague's government do to help the small to medium-sized exporters get involved in trade and to benefit to the extent that some of the larger exporters are?

Mr. Dean Allison: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from New Brunswick Southwest. She is correct that we sit on the trade committee. We have had a number of discussions about how we can help our SMEs do a better job and to access these things. We can never forget that it was the Conservative government that was the government of trade. It was the Conservative government that worked to get CETA down the road and implemented. I realize that the Liberals came along and helped with the ratification, which we appreciate. I think that is important.

Government Orders

If we look at the TPP, we had a bow on it and it was gift-wrapped. All the Liberals needed to do was to take it across the finish line. However, for a couple of years, they were unsure whether they wanted to do anything. At the end of the day, we got a new deal. The new deal had a new name. Therefore, the only new thing we got was that it is now the CPTPP instead of the TPP.

To answer the member for New Brunswick Southwest, one of the things we did as a government was to promote the trade agenda. We moved it forward to create and access more markets so that our SMEs and other businesses had more opportunities to sell around the world.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my Liberal colleague asked my colleague, the critic in this area and shadow cabinet minister in opposition regarding trade, about all the things he liked in the agreement. Of course, he mentioned chapter 19.

However, the government has failed to mention another very important area, which is softwood lumber. There is still not an agreement in that area. I wonder if the member could comment on that.

Mr. Dean Allison: Mr. Speaker, as we look at the number of trade irritants we have with the United States, certainly softwood lumber is one that comes to mind. It was one of the things our former prime minister, Mr. Harper, dealt with. We had a deal in place that expired just after the current government came in. I have heard nothing from the government about its plan or what it would like to do with respect to softwood lumber. It has been languishing for these last three or four years on the issue.

Let us look at some of the things that have been going on. Let us talk about pipelines for a second. The current government likes to talk about all the pipelines we did not build, which is categorically false. We twinned, and did a number of things with at least four pipelines. However, I have not seen anything go in the ground over the last three and a half years.

When we talk about our forestry sector, our major concern is that there has been no action on softwood lumber. We thought that with the renegotiation of NAFTA, this would have been front and centre. The government would have recognized that it had to deal with that kind of thing. However, when I look at the way that these things have been handled—the fact that we had tariffs on steel and aluminum that we did not need to have, because if we had dealt with the issue of safeguards right from the start that would not have been the case—we have gone through pain and suffering.

There has been no mention of what is going to happen with softwood lumber. We see a history of what has happened with this party. As I mentioned in my speech, we see a party that is not prepared to begin the conversation around the renegotiation of NAFTA.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the rumours that the Liberals would push the legislation on the new NAFTA through after Mike Pence's visit are now a reality.

Since 2015, we have heard the government talk about its so-called progressive trade agenda time and again. The question that Canadians should be asking about the new NAFTA is: If the

Liberals are truly interested in improving the deal, why are they undermining the efforts right now in the U.S. to improve it?

Right now, Congress and labour in the U.S. are working hard to improve the key progressive elements in this agreement. In four separate letters sent to Ambassador Lighthizer, they have laid out their call for stronger language to include labour and environmental provisions. They are also pushing hard to change the intellectual property protections in the new NAFTA that favour big pharma and will lock in high prescription drug costs for all three countries. No progressive party should be arguing to increase the cost of medication for citizens, and on this basis alone, we should support their efforts.

I have to note that it was quite interesting to hear the minister in the House earlier giving her speech. She did not even mention that the cost of drugs will be going up for Canadians. Certainly, I can understand why she would not want to wear that badge proudly, but it is something the Liberals need to be honest about with Canadians. They are now increasing the cost of medication on a whole host of biologics that many Canadians rely on for their health, and that is fundamentally wrong.

This renegotiation is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to right the wrongs of the original NAFTA, which has cost Canadians hundreds of thousands of jobs. New Democrats believe that truly progressive trade means working with our partners to improve the lives of Canadians. Instead, it appears that the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs are choosing to ram this legislation through at the end of Parliament to bow to President Trump. It would be no surprise that Trump wants the new NAFTA signed to put pressure on the Democrats in Congress to back down from their progressive asks, but the real surprise here in Canada is that the self-proclaimed progressive government that claims to value the environment, fair working conditions and affordable medication is now bowing to U.S. pressure. That is not something Canadians are proud of, to see their government not trying to get improvements that would help the lives of Canadians.

We all know that the U.S. is our largest trading partner. I come from a region in southwestern Ontario. My riding is right on the border with the U.S. We have the largest border crossing on the Ambassador Bridge, soon to be the new Gordie Howe bridge. We have a tunnel crossing, a rail crossing and a ferry crossing. We are crossing in every way possible. Goods flow across that border every single day at a very high volume, so certainly, we understand the importance of trade in our region. However, we also have a responsibility to ensure that trade deals are being negotiated in the best interest of Canadians. There is no reason to rush this ratification in Canada.

Government Orders

The minister also said earlier that we are moving in tandem with our partners, but that is false. The U.S. has not even tabled legislation in Congress yet. Speaker Pelosi herself has said that they will not do that until they can come to some sort of agreement with Ambassador Lighthizer. Therefore, to say that we are moving in tandem is completely and utterly false. The U.S. is not moving at all in that process. Of course, it is in part of its TPA process right now; that is true, but to say that it is moving toward ratification is not the case.

The Liberal government could and should join New Democrats in our support of what is happening in Congress and its important efforts. If there is any attempt to improve this deal to protect jobs, workers, the environment and the cost of medication, why would the Liberal government not be supportive of that? It really is bizarre to me.

The Conservatives under Brian Mulroney were the original architects of NAFTA. At the time, they ignored the alarm bells that were being raised about job losses and impacts. The member for London—Fanshawe sat provincially at that time. She told me that at the time everything that they raised, all of the issues they brought forward prior to the signing, are exactly what has come to pass in these 25 years: the incredible number of job losses, the textile industry being completely eradicated in our country, the vintners and our wine sector losing 50%. We have had widespread job loss throughout our country, and for some reason, there seems to be no acknowledgement of that in the House.

● (1215)

The Liberals should not be so quick to make the same mistake. They should listen. Any attempt to improve labour provisions in particular should be supported and championed.

The NDP has repeatedly raised major concerns about the impact this deal would have on Canadians. The new NAFTA has sacrificed our dairy farms, locks in the increased cost of medication for sick and vulnerable people and provides no guarantee that workers' jobs would be protected.

Our number one priority is protecting Canadian jobs. If the Liberals rush this new NAFTA through, they will be sending a signal to working people in Canada that they are more interested in a trophy on their trade shelf than they are in improving the lives of working people who are deeply impacted by trade.

At the heart of NAFTA are millions of people who work every day for a decent life for their families and their communities. I am one of those people. Before I was elected, I was an auto worker in Ontario. I lost my job. I was laid off for three years, because investments were going only one way after the signing of NAFTA. They were heading down south chasing cheaper wages.

Twenty-three years ago, when NAFTA was being originally negotiated by the Mulroney Conservatives, they tried desperately to sell Canadian workers on the idea that it is more than just a trade deal. They tried to make the case that this trilateral deal would bring prosperity to everyone across the continent. They claimed it was going to be an equalizer for all. There is an analogy they use that really gets to me. They said that NAFTA was a high tide that would

float all boats. The only boats that anyone saw raised were yachts and many of the other boats sank.

Working people studied NAFTA carefully at the time, and they began to raise alarm bells that it would not work. Labour and civil society brought their concerns to the streets over the weak side agreements. They rightly claimed that it would do nothing to change the inequalities if they did not improve the deal then.

Conservatives pressed on, and now in 2019, we see the impact this deal has had on every community across our country.

Successive governments have neglected to address the alarming reality that the NAFTA promise of 1994 has not led to an increased standard of living for all. The only benefit has been for those who already hold the power and influence.

Where are we today? Income inequality and wealth inequality in Canada are at a crisis level. Forty-six per cent of Canadians are \$200 away from financial trouble. To say that NAFTA has not played a role in that economic instability is complete nonsense.

As I said, I was an auto worker from southwestern Ontario. I saw the effects of NAFTA every day. When I started working 23 years ago at Ford Motor Company, we had six plants in Windsor and 6,700 people working. Today, we have two plants and 1,500 people working. There is a direct line between those job losses and NAFTA.

Every contract negotiation after NAFTA was signed reminded us that our jobs could go to Mexico in a heartbeat. That was always the threat, and it has been held over the heads of working people in the Canadian manufacturing sector at every contract table since NAFTA was signed.

We saw this at local 88 at CAMI Automotive in Ingersoll last year, where workers were out on the line, on strike, because they were being threatened that their jobs would be moved to Mexico. Not surprisingly, not one Liberal showed up on that line. Those people were living the reality of NAFTA and what has happened to working people.

I am not saying that working people in Mexico and the U.S. have it any better. In Mexico, people are constantly threatened to accept unsafe working conditions and keep their wages low. They are threatened that if they ask for more or better, they will not be able to attract that work away from Canada and the U.S. Labour conditions in Mexico in practice do not reflect their international standards or commitments and the regulations are not enforced. The minimum earned salary in Mexico is \$142 Canadian per month. Even that does not meet the monthly minimum living wage in Mexico of \$177 Canadian.

How can workers in Canada compete with extremely low unfair wages for workers who are being treated poorly? It is shameful that Canadian companies and global companies are down in Mexico taking advantage of Mexican workers.

Government Orders

• (1220)

In the new NAFTA there is a \$16 average wage but many across the labour movement are concerned. When looking at an average wage, it includes the entire plant, including the wages of executives and management. The wages of Mexican workers will not go up at all, because that is what the average wage is going to be. That is if corporations even pretend to try to achieve this at all because, quite frankly, the tariff is so low there is no incentive for them to even follow through with this.

This is a gamble we are taking on the backs of working people once again when we have lost hundreds of thousands of jobs. There is the transnational blackmail that is happening between our countries and it has hurt all working people, because we are all connected. Working people are always looking to raise standards for others.

There is the disappearance of a chapter to promote gender equality. When the deal was signed, it included provisions for improving conditions for working women with respect to workplace harassment, pay equity and equality issues, but for some reason, they did not survive the scrub phase and have completely disappeared. What do Liberals have to say about this loss? Where did this promised gender chapter go? I have to be honest. New Democrats do not believe a chapter is sufficient and it is not the answer. There needs to be a full gender analysis and gender impact assessment on this deal and every trade deal we sign, but we have yet to see one from the Liberal government, nor have we been given any indication that this is the direction in which it is going. Once again, women have been knocked completely off the table in this deal, without any explanation from the minister today about why that happened.

The minister did talk about indigenous people. There was a promise of a chapter to promote indigenous rights, but that does not exist in the CUSMA either. Once again, Liberals are signing another trade agreement that disrespects article 19 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which states that they have to obtain free, prior and informed consent. New Democrats believe that indigenous peoples should not be just delegated to a chapter. They should be at the negotiating table and be considered a full partner in any trade deal. We heard the minister reference a lot of the provincial partners she worked with, but we did not hear her talk about the indigenous partners she worked with at the table because they simply were not at the table in an equal fashion.

There is a lot of uncertainty, and this has been talked about throughout the day, about what is happening in the States, but this is why Congress is working hard to improve this deal. I mentioned that I met with Nancy Pelosi and several other Democrats last week. I told her that New Democrats in Canada support the efforts and the important work that Congress and labour are pushing for in the States. It is quite incomprehensible why the Liberals, who came out with some of their objectives after we forced them to at the trade committee, have let those things completely fall off the table.

We have an opportunity to truly fix the problems in this deal, but it appears the Liberals do not want to be a part of that, and they cannot seem to answer why. Why are we in Canada putting pressure on them and doing Donald Trump's dirty work? Quite frankly, it is

mind-boggling. There is this whole idea that somehow we are going to open a Pandora's box, that we all have to be afraid of that, that it is way too scary and we cannot actually improve the deal because we are afraid of what they might do. That is complete nonsense. This is happening in the States. They are pushing for this. There is a precedent of this happening before. In 2007, there were four trade agreements opened at the same time in a very targeted fashion and they were able to make improvements. Why would we not support that? Why are the Liberals fear-mongering to the Canadian public, trying to make people think that better is not possible?

I want to talk about dairy and supply management. Many people know that in the new NAFTA Canada has once again thrown our dairy families under the bus to appease the U.S. The U.S. will gain 3.59% access to our dairy market. On top of the concessions that were in the CPTPP and CETA, that brings the total loss to a 10% market share. I have to ask what other group or sector the Liberals and Conservatives would dare cut 10% of their market share from. That is mind-boggling. For some reason, dairy farmers have become the favourite to throw completely under the bus.

That is not even the worst of it for dairy farmers, who, by the way, are not the wealthy people that some in the House would have us believe. These are hard-working families in my community, in Essex, and across the country. They are people like Mark Stannard and Vicky Morrison. I have been to their farms and know how much pride they put into producing top-quality milk for our communities.

• (1225)

We all know that the bovine growth hormone is used by American dairy farmers and it increases milk production. By the way, that BGH is created by Monsanto. We have absolutely no studies on the effect on human health of this hormone that is being used. We live in a border city, and the people I know would much rather see that little blue cow and know that it is Canadian milk than wonder where it is coming from and what is in it. They would rather pay the prices that they pay, which are honestly right in line with the rest of the globe, to know that they are getting quality milk that is safe for their families.

Another provision in CUSMA grants U.S. oversight of the administration of the Canadian dairy system. While the Liberals like to say that they protected it and they are not dismantling it, now they have to go to the U.S. to get permission to do anything in our own system. This is an issue of sovereignty, and the farmers are rightly raising it and asking why the Liberals have done this. We were forced to abandon our class 7 milk pricing. The agreement also allows the U.S. to limit and monitor our exports, not just to the U.S., but to the world. We have given up far more than just the percentage of market share when it comes to our dairy farmers, and our dairy farmers are certainly not happy about the situation we are in.

Government Orders

I want to talk about the cost of medication. Again, this is a major concession in this deal that the minister did not address earlier and fails to do so at every turn. We pay the second-highest prices in the western world, and the IP provisions the Liberals have agreed to in this deal, to appease big pharma, will increase the cost of drugs for two more years. We have extended the patent. These are biosimilar drugs, such as insulin or Humira, which can treat Crohn's disease or rheumatoid arthritis.

Thanks to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, my colleague, the member for Vancouver Kingsway, initiated a study, and we now know that the estimated drug costs of CUSMA in the first year alone are \$169 million. We are literally making medication more expensive at a time when our country is demanding a national pharmacare program because people cannot afford their medication. If we did not know that the Liberals are doing the work of big pharma from the fact that they have not introduced national pharmacare in four years and keep dangling that carrot in front of Canadians, we certainly know that they did it in the new deal. They do not even want to talk about it or the reality of it.

This is one of the areas the U.S. Congress is trying to fix. Again, it is people and patients in all three countries who will pay the price, while profits continue to soar for big pharma. I know there are people who would say that we need that patent extension so there can be more R and D in our country. We are below 4% in R and D. There is no R and D investment happening in Canada. Big pharma has made this promise to us before, when it got an extension on the patent, and it did not follow through on that deal. Why do we keep rewarding it for bad behaviour that is costing Canadians, and Canadians are not even able to take the drugs they need?

●(1230)

The new copyright provisions in chapter 20 raise the term from life plus 50 to life plus 70 years. This is another TPP hangover that again the Liberals have happily signed onto. It would raise educational costs alone by millions of dollars. In fact, when we did the study on the TPP, we had Girl Guides and librarians coming to warn us about this provision and how it would not only cost us money but limit access to these works in our public space.

If we look at things like where we work, what we eat and the drugs we need, these are all things that matter to Canadians, and these are all concessions that the Liberals have made in this deal.

New Democrats will always stand for fair trade that benefits the lives of Canadians, and the new NAFTA is simply not good enough for Canadians in its current form. We are strongly united to see the changes and the work being done in the U.S. go through. We hope that the Liberals will stop this foolishness of ramming this through the House, because there is nothing happening in the States right now until this deal happens, and we hope they will join us to see a truly progressive deal for working people and for Canadians.

To be honest, working people should not be expected to pay the price for bad negotiations. If the Liberals force this legislation through, they are throwing away our greatest opportunity to make trade fairer for Canadians.

●(1235)

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Kildonan—St. Paul, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that was an interesting speech. At this time, when there is so much exaggeration, we need to be very careful about how we present the facts. There is an onus on all of us to ensure that what we say has a sense of truth and validity and that we can back it up.

How can the member say that indigenous people have been somehow shortchanged or relegated to the back seat on this agreement? I want to take a minute to quote the Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde. He said:

The provisions addressing Indigenous Peoples in the USMCA make it the most inclusive international trade agreement for Indigenous peoples to date. The protection for Indigenous people's rights in the general exceptions to the agreement will protect inherent, Aboriginal and Treaty rights as well as increase stability, certainty and integrity to international trade.

I would ask the member to explain why she put perhaps confusing statements on the record, when the truth is that indigenous people are proud of the Liberal government for making a better international agreement.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Mr. Speaker, I suppose that when there is a low bar for involving indigenous people, then I understand why the Liberals believe they have gotten over that bar, but we are actually signatories to article 19 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which says that one must obtain “free, prior and informed consent”.

Why did the Liberals not achieve that and have yet to achieve that in any single trade deal that exists? That is not respecting indigenous people. I understand the Liberals think that having a few things in this agreement is better than what they previously had, which is quite a sad statement, because indigenous people should be full partners at the table, not relegated to a few lines in a trade agreement.

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I take exception to some of my colleague's comments on wine. We are going to have to talk about that later. NAFTA caused the Canadian industry to step up its game in a big way and, with the help of the government, to pull out some of the stuff they called wine before and plant some newer vinifera varieties.

I asked the minister about the ratification process and the timing. I agree with the member in terms of the confusion or the lack of direction in the U.S. around ratification, as it relates to the Democrats and Mr. Trump. I asked the minister whether something about ratification would happen now or later. My thoughts are that the Liberals should hold off until the U.S. is actually in a position to move forward so we do not play all our cards and box ourselves into a position.

Government Orders

Does the member believe that the Liberals are looking to ratify this as a way to show in the window for the next election “Look at us; we’ve ratified it”, even though that is disingenuous, given the fact that there is so much uncertainty in the U.S. right now?

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Mr. Speaker, the Canadian vintners have a great presentation on the impact of NAFTA. I cannot say it is great, because it actually shows that we lost 50% market share. I invite him to contact them to get that information.

As for ratification and rushing this through, I certainly agree with him. In my speech, I said that the Liberals are trying to put a trophy on the trade shelf. Their record on trade is quite abysmal. The member mentioned the softwood lumber agreement; we still have no resolution on that. The steel and aluminum tariffs are not gone; there are still provisions for them to be returned. We have auto tariffs, where the section 232 decision has a six-month extension. There are still numerous threats that exist, and our trading relationship with the U.S. is quite precarious at the moment. To say otherwise is disingenuous.

When it comes to the ratification process and why this is being rushed through, in my speech I mentioned that I believe the Liberals are doing the work of Donald Trump. Donald Trump wants to stop the work that is happening in Congress, and we all see what is happening in that relationship in the United States right now, and the Liberals apparently have decided, potentially after the visit of Vice-President Pence, that they are going to help him do that work. They are not interested in a progressive—

● (1240)

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments. The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I certainly share many of the concerns of the hon. member for Essex about this new version, NAFTA 2.0, CUSMA or USMCA, depending on where people stand and what country they are in.

I have concerns and I am also torn. CUSMA certainly is a vast improvement in finally getting rid of the investor-state provisions in chapter 11. It is certainly an improvement to get rid of the energy proportionality. That clause really tied Canada’s hands on energy security.

It is lamentable to see it chip away at supply management, as the member has pointed out, and it is certainly worrying that it does more to protect big pharma in patent protection.

In figuring out where we go with this as a Parliament, how do we discount the importance of getting rid of U.S.-based corporations having the right to sue Canada? Invariably, they win and we lose.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Mr. Speaker, the IP provisions on their own are quite extensive, and I mentioned the copyright. I do not believe I mentioned sovereignty, but we can talk about sovereignty and the fact that we now need permission from the States, not just on trade agreements but on regulatory issues.

Chapter 11 has been a long, hard fight, and New Democrats have been part of that fight, as well as labour and civil society. It is interesting to me that Liberals are now on board with that, when we know that it was a U.S. ask. They still argue for it in CETA, the

CPTTP and other trade agreements. They seemed to think it is okay there, but not in this one, because the U.S. wanted it removed.

I really credit all the people on the ground for the work they did to see that removed, but there are many ways the U.S., in a regulatory way, can still come into our space and try to determine what we do and what we regulate. The idea that we have somehow eliminated that corporate pressure on us is not entirely true. We still need to be vigilant about other countries and corporations being able to dictate to us what we can legislate.

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Essex for all the great work she has done on this file. The passion she has for this file, and making sure we get it right, has been totally amazing.

One of the issues and concerns we had in Hamilton and across the country, in the provinces that have steel industries and manufacturing industries, was tariffs. We were very happy when we heard the announcement that the tariffs were lifted.

However, do we know all the details of that agreement? The reason I ask is that one of the problems the steel industry had was about quotas. I understand that no quotas are mentioned in the new document, which is very good. However, a new word has been invented, “surge”. What does that mean? Does that mean that tariffs can come back on at any time if there is a surge? Have the tariffs definitely gone away?

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Mr. Speaker, my colleague has done incredible work on the steel file as well. We sit on the steel caucus together. It really has been a team effort, certainly working with labour and all the stakeholders to see the removal of the tariffs.

However, as the member points out, in the agreement that we have, the tariffs are not actually gone. They could still be imposed at any time. The surge is completely undefined. Some of my Conservative colleagues talk about the importance of certainty and businesses being able to know what they can expect. However, we have undefined terms. I have asked the minister this question directly in question period, and I have not received an answer from her. I do not believe there is an interpretation or a joint understanding of what “surge” means.

There are loopholes that one could drive a truck through in removing these tariffs. There is a lot of uncertainty and fear on the ground that those tariffs could come back.

Government Orders

There is another piece that we gave up. Everyone knows that we did not just reciprocate on the tariffs but we had that secondary list, trying to impose some pressure. We have given up that ability. We can reciprocate, but we cannot have any further tariffs on the U.S.

We have actually given up quite a bit in achieving velocities and there is no certainty for people who work across the steel sector, steel producers or steel manufacturers like Atlas Tube in my riding.

• (1245)

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to inform you that I will be splitting my time with the member for New Brunswick Southwest, who is a hard-working member of our committee. Wherever we go, she mentions how important trade is to her riding, as it borders on the United States, so I am glad to split my time with her.

I rise today add my voice in support of Bill C-100, the Canada-United States-Mexico free trade agreement, or what some would call the old NAFTA or NAFTA 2.

I have had the great pleasure of chairing our international trade committee over the last four years. Some say it is the most active, vibrant, hard-working committee on the Hill. It helps when I bring lobsters once in a while to get everybody to work together. We do not always agree, but we all work together for Canadian companies and for Canadians in making sure we have fair agreements and that they are good for us. Together, we went through the European agreement, the TPP and of course the new NAFTA.

I would like to thank the clerk and staff of the committee, who travel around with us. They put our travel itineraries and our studies together, making sure they are in proper form and getting them to the House. We could not do work at committee without the great staff we have around us.

I would like to commend the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister for the great job they have done. I also commend the premiers. A lot of premiers worked closely with governors in the United States and Mexico. They went down there on their own dime from their own provinces and helped us work this through. There were even some mayors from our country, and of course Canadian stakeholders went back and forth as well to help us get through this deal.

Unions also helped. They were often there with us. In Washington, they worked with us. They worked with their counterparts south of the border. This was very important, and we saw that in what we did for the Mexican workers to improve their lives.

Canada is a trading nation, and currently we have 15 trade agreements. I think we have more than any other G20 country. Our government understands how important international trade is in growing and strengthening our economy, and that is exactly what we are doing. In fact, in 2017, the total trilateral trade among the three countries reached over \$1 trillion U.S., which represents almost 30% of the world's GDP. It is amazing, and it is the envy of countries all over the world that would love to be in this trading bloc.

Our trade committee had the privilege to travel not only to Capitol Hill in Washington a couple of times, but also to San Francisco,

Columbus, Detroit, Chicago and other places in the United States, where we had very productive meetings with senators, members of Congress and chambers of commerce. In these meetings, we stressed the importance of the North American Free Trade Agreement, what it holds for all three economies and how deeply connected our countries are.

My son-in-law is from Mexico, and I have cousins in the United States and friends in Florida. Our countries are closely connected with each other, not only in regard to trade and the military, but in all the things we do.

Our committee was at a chamber of commerce meeting in San Francisco where the guest speaker was George Shultz. He is a former United States secretary of state who worked under a couple of presidents. He made a wonderful speech. He told us that people can have a good job when they start life and can have a good home, but there is nothing like having a good neighbour. He said Canada is the best neighbour that any country could have. I was very proud to hear that from him.

He also said we could work on those things, and said—surprisingly, as he worked for the Republicans—that the next big thing after the trade agreements is to work together on the environment. It was very progressive of him to state that if we work together on that, we can change what is going on in the world with our environmental standards and also be leaders in the business of environmental technology.

We had a big job to do in going to the United States. Most Canadians realize how important trade is, but many times American politicians do not realize the importance of American trade with Canada. The staff at the Canadian embassy in Washington did a great job for us and gave us a map of the United States, which I have with me, showing what each state sells to Canada. Out of the 50 states, every state sells at least \$1 billion of product to us.

• (1250)

These are some of the numbers for a year: Florida sells \$8 billion to us; Washington state, \$10 billion; New York state, \$20 billion a year; Ohio, \$22 billion, out of Columbus; California, \$28 billion. People would think it is mostly the border states, but the biggest is Texas, where we buy over 32 billion dollars' worth of product.

One of our biggest jobs as the committee was going down there and explaining to the senators and congresspeople how much we buy from the U.S.A. I was very proud of our committee and the work we did. We met all these different representatives, and it was part of doing the job. We are a smaller country, but the job we have to do sometimes is to reinforce that understanding.

Government Orders

In my riding alone in Cape Breton and in Atlantic Canada, how much trade we do is unbelievable. For instance, in my riding we have Victoria Co-operative Fisheries. It is a co-operative that started years ago. After the Depression, the co-op movement was big in Cape Breton, and these fishermen got together and had their own co-op. They process their own fish. They buy their supplies together. It is a very good co-op, and when I was talking to them, it was amazing to find out that over three-quarters of their product is sold into the U. S. market. They have beautiful products.

That is just one company in my riding. We also have Protocase, a new company in Sydney that is making electronic boxes and selling them all over the world, but of course the biggest customer is the United States.

We also have Copol International. We are talking a lot lately about plastics; Copol International, from North Sydney, buys plastic pellets from Ohio or Louisiana and mixes discarded shells from lobster, crab and shrimp with the plastic so the plastic can be biodegradable. The company is making a great product and is selling it to California.

That is just in my riding alone, but in all of Atlantic Canada, 62% of exports go to the United States. In Nova Scotia, our biggest export to the United States, over \$1 billion, is seafood, which comes from all over Nova Scotia.

We also have Michelin Tires, which has three plants in Nova Scotia, with 3,500 employees, and most of those tires are sold all through the United States. Nova Scotia is also the biggest exporter of wild blueberries, and 50% of Nova Scotia's frozen wild blueberries go to the United States.

In the other provinces, in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, the Irvings sell lumber. In P.E.I., we cannot have lobster and crab without a feed of French fries or potatoes. Over one billion dollars' worth of French fries and potatoes come right out of P.E.I. and New Brunswick.

We see the importance of trade. Agricultural trade alone in Canada is \$50 billion. It is almost half and half. We buy \$25 billion in agriculture and we sell \$25 billion. The numbers are huge, and the United States is not the only major partner: Mexico is Canada's fourth-largest market, where we export \$2 billion every year in just wheat, canola and beef.

Our trade committee studied e-commerce as another opportunity for Canada to export more products to Mexico. Canada imported almost \$30 billion in trade from Mexico in 2017, so trade is not just with the United States; though we often focus on that, it is with other countries also.

What I am getting at with all these important statistics is that this new agreement is not only preserving existing trade agreements to keep what we have but also improving on them. Every agreement needs a touch-up once in a while. We have to strengthen our economies and open up more doors to opportunity. Trilateral trade among our three countries has always been strong, and now it is going to be stronger.

I am proud to work with this government and this committee and I am proud of what we have done on this agreement. It is not there yet, but we are getting there.

Our committee visited Washington and we have to go in tandem there a bit with them, but I am sure we are going to get it done. It is not just for us in this Parliament; it is for the men and women who are working in fish plants, in the car assemblies or in the pulp and paper mills or on the grain farms. That is what we are here for. We are here to help them, to make sure that trade comes, because without that trade, we do not have prosperity.

• (1255)

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member across the way for demonstrating his passion and commitment and for recognizing the importance of the U.S.-Canada-Mexico trade agreement.

There was talk in the last minute or so of agreements needing improvements every once in a while, but we gave up on the auto sector, we gave up on pharmaceuticals, we gave up on supply management. We did not get a softwood lumber agreement and we did not get a steel and aluminum tariff removal as part of the package.

Is there any area where we actually benefited in trade capacity from the previous agreement, and could the member tell me what the might be?

Hon. Mark Eyking: Mr. Speaker, the number one thing that I hear from people back home and across the country is stability. What we have created here is stability for companies to invest, for example, in the automotive sector or fish plants, and they know they can invest with stability down the road.

On supply management, when our committee was down in the United States, we met with Wisconsin, who said that they did not get enough and wished they could have had more dairy.

The member also talked about pharmaceuticals. We only got 10 years and we wanted 12. Is it perfect and is it what everybody wanted? No, but when we go down there and talk to them, they wish they had more too.

At the end of the day, we had the best negotiators in the world, and we have seen that with our other agreements. We see that in action right here. However, number one is that we have to look at stability for investment in this country. Nobody is going to invest in our country unless stability is there so that men and women can continue to have a job.

Government Orders

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, early in the remarks of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, we heard criticism of the investor state dispute settlement chapters in NAFTA, which was welcome to hear, frankly. As much as Liberals like to say that the NDP is not interested in trade or any kind of trade deal, those who have been paying attention will know that often the NDP's core objection to trade deals negotiated by Liberals and Conservatives is that they contain these kinds of ISDS provisions, which we think are a threat to Canada's sovereignty, ceding too much to international and multinational corporations and giving them too much control over Canadian public policy.

Now that we have heard the minister come out and criticize those kinds of provisions and admit, finally, that Canada has been on the wrong end of those provisions too often, would it be correct to interpret that admission as a mandate that the government will not be including investor state dispute settlement clauses in future trade agreements?

Hon. Mark Eyking: Mr. Speaker, it began with the European agreement. I will give credit to the Conservatives, who started the agreement, but we finished it off. We had to tweak it quite a bit, of course, and one tweak was on the investor dispute mechanism.

It is a very modern trade agreement that we have with Europe. However, coming out of that, our negotiators' position was to protect our governments from multinationals being able to sue them. Therefore, we had that in there, which I think is really a product of what we did in the European agreement.

I am glad that NDP members are starting to look favourably on this agreement, because they often state that they do not agree with any trade agreement, which is not true. I know a lot of NDP colleagues on the other side. They represent workers and they know trade is important.

Everybody wants to have a good agreement. This may not be a perfect agreement, but it is a darn good agreement, which has a lot to do with the work we did on the European agreement, which the Conservatives started and we completed.

I think the NDP members are becoming a little more open-minded about these agreements and know they are important for the workers and their unions.

Mr. Marwan Tabbara (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opposition has said that we gave up on auto, but I want to mention to the opposition that we have invested, particularly in my region. As the member for Sydney—Victoria has mentioned, we have made investments in Michelin Tires Canada, and in Toyota, specifically in my riding, we have invested \$110 million in Toyota in the auto sector. This supports 8,000 jobs in southwestern Ontario and has created 450 new jobs.

I want to ask the member how this investment in auto helps not only my riding but all of Canada. Also, Jerry Dias from Unifor said that the auto industry "should be absolutely thrilled" with this new NAFTA.

• (1300)

Hon. Mark Eyking: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler. He is not on our committee, but he is

always asking questions and making sure that we stand up for the auto industry.

I am glad he brought up the Japanese carmakers, because our committee recently had lunch with the Japanese automakers Honda and Toyota. They are not leaving Canada. They are making reinvestments in Canada. They see that the environment is good, especially with this agreement. They also see Canada, for a lot of their vehicle models, as a stepping stone to Europe. Because we have a trade agreement with Europe now, a lot of the vehicles they make in Canada they can sell in Europe without tariffs. It is a win-win.

We should be proud of ourselves in this Parliament for having a European agreement and this agreement, because Canada is the best place to invest, and we see that from the Japanese automakers. Those vehicles will be sold not only in North America but in Europe, which will help the good folks in the member's riding who put them together.

Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Sydney—Victoria for sharing his time, for his very hard work and certainly for the flavour he adds to the Standing Committee on International Trade. The committee has truly been team Canada. Committee members have stood together and really understand the significance of trade. It is not as much a partisan issue as an issue that is real to every Canadian.

I am pleased to rise today to discuss the importance of this piece of legislation. As the member for New Brunswick Southwest, a member of the Standing Committee on International Trade, a certified international trade practitioner and a former professor of international trade, I truly understand the importance of creating trade opportunities. I have been proud to work with our government to secure trade agreements such as CIFTA, CPTPP and CETA.

Securing these trade agreements is vital to our Canadian economy. Exports and imports make up 60% of our economy. Our competitiveness depends on diversification and opening up new, emerging markets as well as on ensuring the continuation of free and fair trade with our current partners. We know that when we are able to make markets more accessible, especially for small and medium-sized businesses, we are able to grow our economy.

We have worked hard over the last three years to diligently diversify Canadian markets abroad, and the results speak for themselves: 14 new trade agreements, with 51 different countries, and a market of 1.5 billion consumers. Canadians now have preferred access to two-thirds of the global market, but our work is not done yet.

Government Orders

Our government has also launched the export diversification strategy, which will increase Canada's exports by 50%. The strategy will directly support Canadian businesses by investing in infrastructure to support trade, by providing Canadian businesses with more resources to reach overseas markets and by enhancing trade services for Canadian exporters.

We have also worked with Canadian companies to ensure that they are able to take full advantage of the trade agreements secured by our government. I was pleased when the Standing Committee on International Trade accepted my motion and studied supports for small to medium-sized businesses. One of the things we heard many times was how important free trade agreements and export readiness support are to small and medium-sized businesses. Without support, many, if not the majority, of small first-time exporters are not exporting in their second year.

Under the previous government, export readiness available through the Trade Commissioner Service was cut back to serve only companies already established overseas. This left small businesses unable to access foreign markets with ease and ensured that big businesses were the only ones able to profit from free trade.

Our government has reversed those cuts, ensuring that small businesses are able to benefit from free trade. We are increasing our exports and ensuring that any Canadians with global ambitions are able to access the support they need to create wealth and jobs.

Removing regulatory barriers to trade is essential for small and medium-sized businesses to be able to export. CUSMA would do exactly that, ensuring that Canadian businesses will be able to trade freely in North America.

I represent the riding of New Brunswick Southwest. We are, as my colleague from Sydney—Victoria mentioned, a border riding. In fact, we have five international border crossings. In New Brunswick Southwest, we understand the importance of ensuring free trade in North America. Our jobs and our economy depend on it. Many of my constituents cross the border multiple times a week for their jobs or groceries or to visit family and friends. Without the close co-operation as a result of free trade agreements and border alliance agreements, this would not be possible.

When the United States imposed illegal tariffs on our steel and aluminum, people in my riding were concerned about an escalating trade war. This is something they had never experienced. St. Stephen, a border town where my office is located, is closely connected to Calais, Maine, and its residents were particularly worried about these tariffs. These two towns share more than just a border. They also share fire services, and residents cross that border daily. Both mayors were concerned about the tariffs that were put in place, but I am happy to say that our government has reached a deal to end those illegal tariffs.

• (1305)

There was great uncertainty in my riding during the NAFTA renegotiations. Workers and their families were concerned for their jobs, their businesses and their clients.

In my province of New Brunswick, 90% of our foreign exports go to the United States. Ensuring that New Brunswickers maintained access to that market was critical, and we have delivered. CUSMA

would ensure that New Brunswick would be able to trade freely for decades to come.

Canada is now the only G7 country to have free trade agreements with every other G7 country. Canada's unprecedented access to the global market has allowed us to act as a springboard between trading partners.

By securing both CETA and CUSMA, Canada would now be able to facilitate trade between Europe and the United States. This would be an excellent opportunity for Canadian companies to expand to broader markets and become part of the global supply chain. In fact, where my riding is located, on the coast of Maine, is actually a springboard between the United States and Europe.

Modernizing NAFTA has been a welcome opportunity for Canada. We were able to gain protections for Canadian workers, create opportunities for Canadian business and protect the environment and labour.

While many across the aisle called for us to back down, we held firm. Our government fought for a new NAFTA and got a deal that was good for Canadians. We did everything in our power to protect jobs, create more opportunities for Canadian workers and their families and ensure the growth of our economy. It has paid off.

By modernizing NAFTA, our government was able to deal with new challenges that were not present when the deal was originally signed. Issues like e-commerce and intellectual property rights in the digital age would now be addressed.

In CUSMA, we were able to obtain labour guarantees in Mexico that would ensure the fairer treatment of workers. CUSMA would see labour standards and working conditions in all three countries improve and would protect those who are vulnerable from being denied work based on gender, pregnancy or sexual orientation.

CUSMA would also ensure that workers' rights were protected. It includes commitments from all three countries to protect the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining, including specific legislative actions that would be taken by Mexico to recognize the right to collective bargaining.

We did not stop at labour rights. We also ensured that CUSMA included a robust chapter on the environment to ensure that it would be protected. CUSMA includes commitments to enforce environmental protection laws and to address marine pollution. We included obligations for all three countries to combat illegal wildlife trade, illegal logging and illegal unreported and unregulated fishing.

CUSMA would also promote sustainable forestry and fisheries management, including a commitment to prohibit subsidies that negatively affect fish stocks.

Our government also secured innovative fisheries commitments to prevent the use of explosives and poisons and a binding commitment to prohibit the practice of shark finning, a first for Canada.

Government Orders

These are important issues in my riding. My constituents care deeply about the well-being of the environment, and many of our industries rely on it. I am proud to see that our government has fought for strong environmental protections.

I was proud to be part of the team that secured a new and better deal for the future, a deal that would protect middle-class jobs, allow small businesses to grow and protect labour and the environment.

• (1310)

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Nelson Star, which is a newspaper in my riding, has this headline today: “B.C. sawmills shutting down for another 2-6 weeks”.

I have 12 mills in my riding, of which about nine are family owned. They are shocked that there is nothing in the USMC free trade agreement, and no discussion at all, about the softwood lumber tariffs of 21% that have been in place for quite some time.

Could the member share with me why the government left softwood lumber out of the USMCA negotiations? It is at least as important in my riding, and in many others across the country, as aluminum and steel. What is the government going to do about it going forward?

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Mr. Speaker, in New Brunswick, softwood lumber is a really critical issue, as it is in British Columbia. For decades, our area has been excluded from any tariffs. We also feel that the tariffs placed on New Brunswick softwood right now are unfair tariffs.

Anytime I have been to Washington, which has been numerous times, either with the trade committee or the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group, I have raised the issue of softwood lumber. I have met with the National Association of Homebuilders in the U.S., and I have spoken with the minister about it. It is not a forgotten issue. It is not part of NAFTA, but I know that it has been part of the discussions.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member and I sit on the trade committee and I thank her for the work she has done there. She has been very honourable on that committee. It is a committee that functions very well in this Parliament. On this file in particular, we see the value and importance of two billion dollars' worth of trade a day. We have been working together as best we can, and I think Canadians will be proud of us.

However, there are some concerns. One of the concerns with respect to this agreement is the upheaval and the process in the U.S. of getting it ratified. Does the member have any insight from the Liberal government on what the process will be here in Canada as we ratify this agreement in step with the U.S.? We also cannot forget about the situation that is going on in Mexico.

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his work on the trade committee. It has been a long-standing relationship for three and a half years.

As Canadians we have an obligation to find the best agreement that is good for Canadians, certainly in tandem with the U.S. and Mexico. We ultimately need a deal that is best for Canadians, and I think this is the best agreement we are moving forward with. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs has said numerous times, it is not just any deal. It is the best deal. I look forward to seeing the details of this

deal before the trade committee, even if that requires us to come back this summer.

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, CCF): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Minister of Foreign Affairs that one of the best features of the new NAFTA is the removal of the investor-state dispute resolution provisions which had enabled foreign corporations to directly challenge our democratic laws, regulations and policies before secretive international tribunals rather than in the normal court system. Therefore, I am wondering whether the government will seek to remove investor-state provisions from Canada's other free trade agreements.

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Mr. Speaker, from talking with our international trade negotiators, I can say that we have the best in the world. The deals that have been ratified, the 14 agreements that we have reviewed as a trade committee, are very solid and quality deals. Any kind of element like the ISDS mechanism is an important one to review. Certainly, when we look at big pharma, there has been no other government in history that has put forward a pharmacare plan or extended the patents for 10 years.

• (1315)

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I also work with the member for New Brunswick Southwest on the trade committee. She is a very valuable member, who speaks up for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

I had the pleasure of joining her and the member for Prince Albert in Washington recently. I want to ask her for her thoughts on the last trip to Washington as it relates to CUSMA.

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Mr. Speaker, as someone who has taught international trade for over 20 years, to be sitting in Washington the week before the decision came forward regarding steel and aluminum was really a “pinch me” moment. To sit in the offices of members of Congress or senators with my colleagues as a small team and say that if the tariffs were not lifted we would not be ratifying the new NAFTA was a real turning point for me on the trade committee. We were very clear, and it was accepted. We now see that the tariffs have been lifted on steel and aluminum.

I would say to all parties in this House that, even after the deal has been ratified, we have a responsibility to continue that relationship. Just like with any family, we cannot take the relationship for granted. I think we have done a tremendous job in this House with respect to educating and creating greater awareness about our relationship, and we need to continue that.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

Government Orders

This deal has definitely been a rocky road for Canada. It has created a lot of tension, although “stress” may be a better word, for a lot of Canadians and Canadian businesses. In light of working with a president who was threatening to rip up NAFTA and with all sorts of other issues going on in the U.S. and the U.S. election, it definitely caught Canadians' attention these last four years. It is very important that we now talk about the rest of the story, how we have ended up where we are today and why we ended up being a target instead of having a deal that would make North America more competitive in the world marketplace.

Two and a half years ago, the Prime Minister volunteered to renegotiate NAFTA, and that is fine. What was not clear was what his goal was. In his mind, I do not think he had a clear goal. I do not think he had a clear idea of what he wanted the outcome to look like, and that caused a lot of stress and failures as the negotiations progressed.

We could look at the new NAFTA as a chance to make North America more competitive, to create an environment throughout North America and take advantage of all the strengths that Mexico, the U.S. and Canada have to offer, putting them together and competing strongly in the world marketplace. We had that opportunity and we lost it. That is frustrating for Canadian businesses and it is frustrating for businesses right across North America because it was there and we did not achieve it.

Mexico calls it NAFTA 0.8. We call it NAFTA 0.5. The reality is this is not a good agreement. It is okay; it stinks, but the business community says it would rather take a bad agreement in this case than have no agreement, to have it ripped up and have nothing. After all, the U.S. is 70% of our business and we do some \$2 billion in trade every day with the U.S. The reality is that we ended up with an agreement that the U.S. and Mexico negotiated and Canada signed onto afterward. How did that happen?

I will talk about the inside baseball going on in D.C. while this was going on. When I went to D.C. the first time after the Trump election, I and the former leader of the Conservative Party, Rona Ambrose, visited Congress and very quickly we realized a couple of things. The first was that Canada was not the target in these deals. Members of the House of Representatives and Senate said they had problems with Mexico. We told them that if they were renegotiating NAFTA, they were also renegotiating with Canada. They said, “We have no issues with Canada. That is crazy.” They did not even understand the relationship between Canada and the U.S. They did not understand how important that relationship is and how much business is done.

The former Conservative leader and I said we needed to help them on this deal because if they did not get this right, it would cost us a lot of jobs and our economy would suffer substantially. We worked closely with the Liberal Party. There is no question about it. We did not deny it. I did round tables right across Canada and spoke to Canadian businesses about what they wanted out of the agreement. The committee sat in the summer to give the minister a chance to talk about what she thought the agreement could look like when it was completed, and she did not. She sent some virtue-signalling ideas of what she would like to include in the agreement, ideas the Liberals knew the U.S. president would never accept, ideas that

really did not do anything for competitiveness in Canada, but that was their starting point. We knew right then that we were in trouble.

I will admit that members of the House from all parties worked very well together on this agreement. Whether it was the trade committee or the Canada-U.S. group, they worked well together. Where did it fall down? Where it fell down is very serious and shows how problematic things can get. It fell down in the PMO and the minister's office. Members did a great job educating members in the U.S. at the state level and the federal level on the importance of our relationship. When we go to the U.S., they quote our numbers back to us on how important that relationship is. How did it end up that Canada became the target instead of Mexico?

During Trump's speeches in the U.S. during the election campaign, what did he talk about? He talked about building a wall. He said NAFTA was horrible and Mexico took all of the jobs. He said that trade with China is horrible and China took all the jobs. He said that the U.S. lost all their jobs. The only thing he mentioned about Canada was a bit about dairy. He wanted access to dairy into Canada. He did not like the fact that our dairy producers are profitable and the U.S. dairy producers were in a system that did not allow them to become profitable. In reality, they did not want to ship milk to Canada; they wanted the price that Canadians had for their milk in Ohio.

● (1320)

What changed? I can remember sitting down with Secretary Ross, who said, “Canada and the U.S., everything is good here. In fact, there should be some changes here, maybe in the buy America provisions to include Canada like the 51st state.” I remember him saying, “We should also do a trade deal together with Japan.”

We were invited to the table to go to Japan, if we wanted to choose that. We chose the TPP route, which I think is a better route. However, it shows how good the relationship was at that point and where it has ended up today. It comes back to how the PMO and the minister handled the relationship with the President of the United States.

We said very publicly that the Prime Minister did not need to be his best friend, but he should not poke him. I said, “Do not poke him.” Making a speech in New York, in his backyard, criticizing the president is not a wise thing. It might get the Prime Minister on *Saturday Night Live* and all the left-wing media in the U.S. would love him for it, and the Prime Minister would enjoy himself because he is popular with the left-wing media in the U.S., but at what expense? Canadian jobs.

After the Montreal summit, what did the comments the Prime Minister made about the president do? It led to the aluminum and steel tariffs. On those types of things, he could not help himself. He wanted to be a popular prime minister in the U.S. I needed a functional prime minister here in Canada, not a populist in the U.S.

Government Orders

With the minister, it was the same thing. Some of her articles in the U.S. were insulting to the president. Why would she do that in the middle of negotiations with our biggest trading partner?

Mr. Speaker, how would you feel if I insulted you right now? Would you cut me off and tell me to sit down, or would you let me keep going?

That is what they were doing down there. That is what the Prime Minister and the minister were doing in the U.S. That is what was creating the problems we have here today. That is how we ended up with NAFTA 0.5.

We would go down and actually build a strong relationship between the White House and Parliament, and they would destroy it over and over again. I am sure our ambassador down there must have been pulling out his hair, because some of the directions he was given to lobby on behalf of Canada were definitely anti-Trump or anti-Republican sentiments. Why would they do that in the middle of negotiations of our biggest trade deal? Why? It is just amazing.

We saw that over and over again. That part of the story needs to be told here in Canada so that Canadians understand when we start losing jobs, so that Canadians understand why we gave up market access, and so that Canadians understand why we cannot expand another auto plant in Canada. It is not because we were the target at the start. It is because of the actions of these offices that created that problematic situation.

We are going to support this deal. As I said, in this case a bad deal is better than no deal. Too many jobs are at stake.

It is going to be interesting to watch this. As we watch the outcome and what is going on with Mexico and the U.S., and the battles they are having amongst themselves, it will be interesting to see if our Prime Minister can actually stay out of it. It will be interesting to see how the Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, moves forward with legislation, and how we are going to handle that. Even though we think we have an agreement, and we have signed an agreement, until the Democrats put it through the House ways and means committee, we really do not have a 100% final agreement. I think it is important that we do that in sync with them. That is the route the committee is looking at.

It did not have to be this way, if we had approached this in the right way with the president. When he said he had labour issues in Mexico, we could have said that we have labour issues in Mexico. When the president said he had steel being dumped from China, we could have said we have steel being dumped from China. Canada had a lot of the same issues the president was talking about during his campaign. We are not building a wall. We are not doing those crazy things. We do not need to. Mexico has been a good trading partner and a good friend. However, the reality is there were opportunities to build upon the same concerns the U.S. had, and to actually produce an agreement that would have made us even more competitive internationally.

Another failure in this agreement has to be on softwood lumber. Canadians have to see that. The reality is there are lots of things in this agreement that we need to fix.

On October 21, Canadians are going to change their government, and we are going to have the responsibility, again, of fixing all the discrepancies that the Liberals have left on the table. We will fix them. We will go back to the U.S. We will do it in a positive and approachable manner, and we will deal with them issue by issue. A government led by the Leader of the Opposition will fix these things. Canadians can take comfort in knowing that.

In the meantime, this agreement will pass and hopefully will be ratified because, as I said, the instability created by not having an agreement is far worse than what we have right now.

● (1325)

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I want to commend the hon. member for Prince Albert for all the great co-operation he has shown with his commitment on the international trade committee to get this deal and the deal on the steel and aluminum tariffs. He has worked diligently with the government, and I want to commend him for that.

However, I do not agree with the way he spoke in the House today. I want to remind the hon. member that it is the current Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs who have shown the leadership to get this deal done. The Conservatives wanted any deal at any cost to Canadians. They wanted to take off the retaliation measures on tariffs on steel and aluminum, but they still wanted to get the deal through.

There is one thing that I agree on with a former prime minister. Does the hon. member agree with the former prime minister, Brian Mulroney, when he said that Canada got what it wanted and it was a good deal?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, Canada got what it took. The deal was arranged in Mexico between the U.S. and Mexico and we signed on after it was done. We did not add anything to it at that point in time. We vacated the responsibility of our negotiators to Mexico to do the final deal. That is where the breakdown in the minister's role in this deal was.

The reality is that when the negotiators walked away and the U.S. and Mexico kept negotiating, without our even being in the room, this is what the Liberals got. If there had been leadership, they would never have allowed that happen. If there had been leadership, they would have recognized the issues right away and dealt with them. If there had been leadership, they would have focused the conversation, like every member of the House did, on competitiveness, on ensuring we would have a very vibrant North American economy and would deal with the issues that the U.S. had, Mexico had and we had and then get those issues dealt with in a positive manner so we could be even more competitive in the world.

The Liberals did not do that. They did absolutely nothing. They just went along for the ride because they did not know what they wanted. That is the reality of what we have here today.

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, free trade agreements with the Liberal government have now cost our dairy sector about 10%. From my perspective, two things should be protected in every trade agreement. Number one is our water and number two is our food and agriculture.

Government Orders

I wonder if the member cares to comment on whether continuing to lose agriculture to these trade agreements is the right thing to be doing.

• (1330)

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, before the trade agreement talks even started, one of the big issues in the U.S. was all the people who would be left behind. What about the people who are negatively impacted by a trade deal? What are we going to do to ensure they are made whole and are able to function in a very progressive manner in the new environment created by the trade deal? Dairy is another example of that. What are the Liberals going to do for the dairy sector to ensure people are properly compensated for the loss they have had in both TPP and in these NAFTA talks?

There is nothing in the budget to help any of the sectors that are negatively impacted by this agreement. There is no game plan for them. The Liberals have not listened. They have not learned from people's complaints in the past. They have done nothing. Yes, people are going to feel the pain, unfortunately, and the Canadian economy will grow, but some people will be left out because the Liberals have not planned for that.

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder what the hon. member's position is on this. If he believe that this is 0.5 of a deal, why would the Conservative Party support it? This is not 0.5. This is a 2.0 effort that has been engaged in by parliamentary committees and by hundreds of visits by the Prime Minister, the minister and the parliamentary secretary. The engagement from all parliamentarians has been very supportive. How can the Conservatives possibly support a deal they do not think is a very good deal?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, when we talk to people in the business community, they say it is not a good deal but they want the stability. They tell us to plug our noses, get it done and get off its radar so they can keep on doing business and get investment in Canada. That is the reality and that is what we are dealing with.

However, they have also say that we have to get rid of those guys. They say they cannot afford the Liberals anymore, that they have to go. They tell us that we need a clean plan for things like softwood lumber, for dealing their competitiveness factor in North America. We need a plan. Only the leader of the Conservative Party has that plan and it will change on October 21. The sun will shine again on Canada after October 21.

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise once more in the House to talk about the NAFTA trade deal. I listened to the talking points of the Liberals. They talk about all the good things international trade and the free trade agreement do. They are the same old talking points.

Once upon a time when we were in government, we said the same thing in support of free trade. However, I need to remind members on the other side that it was the Conservatives who were the party that pushed for free trade. NAFTA came about because of the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney. No one in the country would say that NAFTA was not a good deal for Canada.

However, as my colleague from Prince Albert has just eloquently said, the problems are with NAFTA .5. When the parliamentary secretary says why 0.5 and not 0, simply and straightforwardly, we

do not trust the Liberals to set up any kind of a good deal, knowing the results since they have come into power.

I remember very clearly that it was the Liberal Prime Minister who shunned TPP in Vietnam. He was the only leader not to go. At that time, he had his own idea of free trade. Even the Chinese shut the door in his face. The point of this story is the reason why the Conservative Party supports this, despite all the flaws and everything here, because the business community needs this. The Conservative Party has always been a very proud free trade party. During the time of Prime Minister Harper, we signed a lot of free trade agreements around the world because we knew it is right.

The biggest one for everyone was NAFTA. Today, we call it NAFTA 0.5. The Liberals want to call it NAFTA 2.0. Mexico calls it NAFTA 0.8. The fact is that, yes, the business community needs stability. The business community is looking for some kind of stability in this economy so it can move forward. This is one way in which we can bring that kind of stability.

However, to remind all Canadians, since the Liberal government has taken power, five premiers have written to the Prime Minister today. They has said that under his regime, Bill C-69 and Bill C-48 will threaten national unity. That has never happened before, where five premiers have written to say that Liberals have created an environment in the country that is not conducive to business and actually threatens the security of national unity. It is unprecedented. That is the record the Liberals have for the economy, which is why we do not trust them to get NAFTA back.

However, there is some hope in the sense that even with this flawed NAFTA deal, the business community will have some kind of confidence in the economy, forgetting about what the Liberals have done. The country needs to do it. We do not know where the Liberals are going with the Trans Mountain pipeline. Hopefully very soon we will have shovels in the ground.

I come from a province that has taken a massive hit by the Liberals' economic policy, and it continues. Right now, confidence in Canada is declining under the government.

Under Prime Minister Harper's government, confidence in Canada was going up. Under the current government, investor confidence in Canada is going down. We can talk to anyone out there, in London or New York and so on. If it comes to Canada, they slowly turn their heads away. The sunny days and sitting on the international stage by the Prime Minister has all evaporated in the air. He is no longer the darling of anything and if he continues the way he is, we could face serious economic poverty.

Hopefully, on October 21, Canadians will have a choice and will send the Liberals packing on their economic record, which is one of the most important things that needs done, because jobs bring stability.

Government Orders

• (1335)

I saw the most foolish ads yesterday when watching the Raptors. They were so-called third party advertisements against the leader of the official opposition. I have never seen a more idiotic advertisement. They will make Canadians more angry.

Unifor, the so-called journalists' union, is absolutely at the forefront of this sentiment, making it very clear that it does not like the Conservative Party. What it seems to forget, however, is this is not about Unifor; it is about Canadians and jobs. Unifor keeps saying it wants to fight for jobs. However, if it wants to fight for jobs, it should be honest about it. It should work for all Canadians and not be partisan.

Once more, I am standing in the House of Commons to stand up for free trade. We all know free trade has immense benefits for our country and for our jobs. If there were no tanker ban, no problematic Bill C-69, there would be such confidence in Canada. We would be a model country.

We have been blessed with natural resources. We do not have just one natural resource, but multiple. We should develop them, although I agree 100% that this should be environmentally sound.

Let us look at our oil production. We have one of the best systems in the world. We can compare it to those in countries like Venezuela and Nigeria, where there are no environmental standards. They are moving full steam ahead. Let us be honest. Let us work environmentally. It is time for the country to move forward with developing its natural resources.

With respect to the new NAFTA that has just been signed, all my colleagues have, very eloquently, made it clear that it has serious flaws. We want confidence. It is the one piece of legislation the government has brought forward that can give some kind of confidence to the business community that Canada is a free trade country.

Many people do not understand the amount of money Canadian businesses invest overseas. It is in the trillions of dollars. If it were not for free trade agreements, Canadian businesses would be unable to invest overseas. The Canadian investments of over \$1 trillion will, in the longer term, help our country's economy, making businesses very strong.

Free trade agreements go both ways. They are for us and the countries with which we sign. That is why so many are signing on to the TPP. I am glad that the government finally, after insulting the leaders of the TPP, came to its senses. This came after China told us to take a hike when Canada went to China to sign a free trade agreement.

In the end, the Conservatives will support the bill because we believe Canadians need confidence, the economy needs confidence and the business community needs confidence so we can proceed forward and create jobs that will benefit each and every Canadian.

• (1340)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was very happy to hear my colleague across the way speak about the importance of jobs and supporting different industries. Of particular

importance are our cultural industries across our country. I know this as I am chair of the Canadian heritage committee.

I would like the member to comment on Magazine Canada's response to the USMCA. It said:

Magazines Canada's nearly 400 members across the country congratulate [the] Prime Minister...[the] Minister [of Foreign Affairs]...[the] Minister [of Canadian Heritage] and the Canadian negotiating team for their successful preservation of the cultural exemption in the USMCA.... We are especially pleased that the cultural exemption applies in both the analogue and digital spaces. This digital inclusion will be critical to Canadian magazines and other cultural industries in the years to come.

The magazine points out that there is about a \$1.7-billion contribution to Canada's GDP from the magazine industry.

Could the member respond to the notion that this is a success for our cultural industries?

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, we are a small country. The U.S.A. is a very large country. Naturally, being a small country, we have to safeguard our cultural industries. Otherwise, we will be overpowered by big American companies.

This is why we have stated that we will support the free trade agreement. However, we need to improve on it. There are finer details to note on the issues the member raised, but in the larger scheme of things, indeed Canadian culture is thriving.

Governments do not have to give money for Canadian culture. Governments do not have to give money for newspapers to stay alive. Right across the country, wherever I go, Canadian culture is thriving.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's knowledge and history in this chamber, and his understanding of many of the trade issues that have occurred. This particular situation seems to have arisen with the President of the United States talking about some trade issues he had with Mexico, and then the Prime Minister of Canada wanted to be involved. We are not sure why he did that. I know he would understand that some people might think the softwood trade agreement that we often hear about has something to do with British Columbia. However, it is not just British Columbia. He might be able to respond about how big an issue this is for Canada from coast to coast.

Could my colleague respond with what he knows about the history of trade and other things that are important that are not in this agreement?

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, actually my hon. colleague is my member of Parliament, so he can ask me that question. However, he brought up a point rightly. We just said that we are resource rich across this country. Every region has its strengths and weaknesses. Every region has its own natural resources. Right now, there is fossil fuel in Alberta, softwood lumber, when we talk about British Columbia, and fisheries and lobster across the east.

Government Orders

It is critically important that when we sign free trade agreements that we take all of that into account and do not just sign sector by sector by sector, which is why this is critically important. I have seen TPP in Australia and New Zealand and their issues. There is no question or doubt about the free trade agreement and natural resources. There is no question about being environmentally friendly. Climate change is there, and it is important that we take that into account now that we are developing our resources.

I can assure my friend that when we were in power, we did well. When we are in power, we will do better.

● (1345)

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, seeing that the member is from Alberta and was talking about premiers earlier, I want to know if he would agree with what Premier Jason Kenney said on Twitter on May 17: “The removal of US tariffs from Canadian steel and aluminum products is good news for our economy. Thank you to the federal government for its successful efforts, and to the US Administration for doing the right thing.”

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, it was very clear right from the first, when the tariffs were put here, that we took a very strong stand, which Jason Kenney has done. However, for the government to take credit for it is not right. As my colleague has said, all of us worked on it, including members of the trade committee, who went to the U.S. and lobbied everywhere. Let me put it this way: Irrespective, it was good for Canada.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, whom I had the opportunity to work with on the Standing Committee on International Trade before she became the deputy whip. She did excellent work for her constituents and for Canadians.

Strong and diverse trade is key to Canada's economy. That is why I am proud to speak in support of the benefits of a modernized free trade agreement between Canada, United States and Mexico. Trade has always been at the core of Canada's economy. As a member of the Standing Committee on International Trade, I heard from Canadians about the importance of trade for our economic prosperity and well-being. The goods, the innovation and the skills that we export are the backbone of our economy. It supports the growth of small businesses and creates good, well-paying jobs for Canadians.

In the last four years, we have created over one million new jobs and brought our unemployment rate to its lowest point in over 40 years. Our expanding trade markets are a key part of this growth and have created new opportunities for businesses to grow. When the time came to renegotiate NAFTA, our government approached the task with clear determination and strength.

Our free trade agreement with the United States and Mexico represents the biggest economic region in the world. More than \$2.2 billion in goods and services are traded daily. For British Columbia, NAFTA means continued market access security for over 20 billion dollars' worth of exports that we send to the U.S. each year.

However, this negotiation was more important than just what the numbers represent. It was about making sure that Canadian workers who rely on well-paying export-dependant jobs were being protected, as well as making sure that Canadian businesses would

have the opportunity to grow and prosper, with access to 480 million consumers in North America.

Throughout this process, the right hon. Prime Minister, along with the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, showed strong leadership in getting this deal finalized.

Since our government began negotiations, representatives have visited the United States more than 300 times. We made more than 500 individual contacts with American officials, of whom over 310 were members of Congress, and met with many governors and other business leaders. It is because of this leadership and hard work that we are here today discussing the successful negotiation of this NAFTA agreement.

This agreement preserves free trade across North America's \$25-trillion market, which has grown significantly since the original NAFTA was adopted in 1993. It does this while making sure that we are protected from the threat of auto tariffs that would put thousands of good-paying jobs and families at risk.

There are a number of key elements within this deal that are going to provide protections for Canadians. First, this deal fully upholds the impartial dispute resolution of chapter 19 of the original NAFTA. With this system, any disagreement over trade goes to an independent binational panel that gets to decide on how the matter will be resolved.

● (1350)

Second, this agreement removes the proportionality clause that was not in the interest of Canada's energy sector. It is because of these changes that the oil industry will save more than \$60 million a year in administrative fees and costs.

Third, we have successfully negotiated the removal of the investor-state dispute resolution system that has allowed companies to sue the Canadian government. Since coming into effect, this has cost Canadians taxpayers more than \$300 million in penalties and legal fees. This system put the rights of corporations over those of the governments, and we have brought an end to that.

Statements by Members

As an MP from British Columbia, I am very pleased to note the regional benefits to British Columbia. This means stability for workers in the lumber industry, energy and the processed food sector, to name a few. For agriculture goods under the new agreement, Canadian exports will continue to benefit from duty-free access for nearly 89% of the U.S. agriculture tariff lines and 91% of Mexican tariff lines. This is a big deal for British Columbia. In 2017 alone, farmers in British Columbia exported over \$2.1 billion to the U.S. markets. New gains in this agreement mean new market access opportunities for British Columbia exporters of everything, from berries, dairy products and even sugar.

The preservation of chapter 19 is especially important for British Columbia's softwood lumber industry, which exported \$4.3 billion to the United States in 2017. It also ensures that British Columbia's 178,000 small and medium-sized businesses will have an easier time shipping their products to the U.S. and Mexico, by eliminating paper processes and providing a single portal for traders to submit documentation electronically. The new chapter on small and medium-sized enterprises will foster co-operation to increase trade and investment opportunities for businesses.

As I mentioned earlier, all of these achievements took hard work, resolve and, above all, the strong leadership of this Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. When the United States applied tariffs to Canadian steel and aluminum products, we responded quickly with our own dollar-for-dollar tariffs. Despite calls from the Conservatives to drop our retaliatory measures, we held firm and secured the full lifting of steel and aluminum tariffs.

It was the NDP that wanted us to hold off on signing the side letters that protected our auto industry from tariffs. This agreement is going to help the auto industry in Ontario. Despite the all-or-nothing calls from the NDP, we know that Canadians' economic prosperity is too important to sacrifice for political gains.

This modernized and upgraded NAFTA agreement is going to make sure that our economy continues to grow, Canadians continue to work in good-paying jobs and our interests as a country are protected for many years to come.

● (1355)

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of sitting on the trade committee with the hon. member. He certainly is a valuable asset.

I would like to ask the member what his feelings are about the agreement as it relates to the constituents he represents so well in British Columbia? What opportunities are there for people in B.C. as well as the rest of Canada?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, I work with the member for Sault Ste. Marie on the international trade committee. When it came to the tariffs on steel and aluminum, the member showed great leadership. He mentored us in the right direction. We were able to get a deal done that his constituents wanted.

My riding of Surrey—Newton in British Columbia is only minutes away from the U.S. border. This agreement would give us stability and predictability so businesses in Surrey—Newton and the rest of British Columbia can flourish and do well.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I heard my colleague's comments about the softwood lumber, steel, aluminum and automotive sectors, but I did not hear him say anything about supply-managed producers.

We are being asked to ratify this quickly, but would that not mean giving the government a blank cheque to ratify the agreement without compensating our supply-managed producers? We should be sending a cheque to every supply-managed producer rather than giving this government a blank cheque.

[*English*]

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for raising the issue of supply management. It was the Conservatives that wanted to eliminate supply management and it was our government that protected it so our farmers can do well in the coming years.

The Deputy Speaker: There will be two and a half minutes remaining for questions and comments for the member for Surrey—Newton when the House next gets back to debate on the question.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

LAC-MÉGANTIC

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when the people of Lac-Mégantic called for a public inquiry into the rail disaster that happened in their town, the Minister of Transport called them conspiracy theorists. However, a number of questions remain unanswered, including the following:

Why did Transport Canada allow a negligent company to operate massive convoys of oil tankers with only one employee on board?

Why was that allowed even after the National Research Council had warned that safety was an issue?

Who decided to ignore the known deficiencies, and under what kind of pressure?

Why is it that the initial investigation identified six causes for the disaster, all connected to the one-member crew, but they were all removed from the final report?

Why did the Transportation Safety Board not hold a public inquiry, when it could have done so?

Why has the number of rail incidents increased since the Lac-Mégantic tragedy?

Why did an identical derailment kill three people in British Columbia in February?

Statements by Members

All these questions show that, rather than insulting people, the Minister of Transport should launch a public inquiry immediately.

* * *

• (1400)

[English]

OPIOIDS

Ms. Kate Young (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to opioid use and addiction, Canada is facing a national public health crisis. The city of London is one that has been greatly affected. I was extremely disappointed to learn that the Ford government in Ontario has rejected funding for a permanent supervised consumption site on York Street in London. Permanent supervised consumption sites save lives.

Since the opioid crisis escalated in 2016, our government has taken significant action. We have invested over \$331 million in efforts to respond to the crisis and address broader substance abuse. The Ford government is putting the lives of Londoners addicted to opioids at risk by saying no to this permanent consumption site. Our government will continue to monitor the situation closely and respond to the crisis at the federal level.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the environment minister says that if someone repeats a talking point and says it louder, people will totally believe it. She has been misleading Canadians by telling them that they will get back all of the money they pay for the carbon tax, all the money totally back.

I got my climate action rebate when I did my taxes this year. I received \$169, but it is costing me \$10 more every time I fill up with gas each week. If I add that up over a year, that is more than \$500, and that is before I add in the increased costs of home heating, groceries, etc. Clearly, the Liberals are taking more from my pocket and the pockets of all other Canadians with this carbon tax and they definitely are not giving it back, not all the money, not totally back.

This carbon tax is not as advertised.

* * *

P.E.I. BUSINESS HALL OF FAME LAUREATES

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I recognize this year's laureates for the P.E.I. Business Hall of Fame.

Jack and Carlotta Kelly founded Bulk Carriers (P.E.I.) Limited in 1970 from the basement of their house. Today, the company has over 150 employees, 100 tractor-trailers and a reputation for trust and excellence across the country.

Kevin and Kathy Murphy are hospitality all-stars. After opening their first restaurant in 1980, the Murphys quickly expanded their operation to include hotels, restaurants and breweries across Atlantic Canada.

Sadly, inductee Kathleen “Kay” MacPhee died last month. Kay used her expertise and passion as a teacher to create literacy software for children, helping her hearing-impaired son Lowell and countless others develop reading and language skills.

Each of these laureates reflects the best the island has to offer. They have made enduring contributions to Canada. Congratulations to all.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the national day of healing and reconciliation and the anniversary of the government's apology for residential schools.

As MPs, we recognize the harms that Canada has inflicted on first nations, Métis and Inuit people. Though we can never truly understand the loss of culture and language, and the family separations Canada has caused, I continue to be inspired by the young people across Canada who are working on building a path forward. That includes people like Renée Carrière and her students at Charlebois Community School in Cumberland House. Their book entitled *Muskrats and Fire* teaches youth about indigenous cultural practices and how they benefit the ecosystem in northern Saskatchewan.

Reconciliation and healing are done in small and profound ways. I challenge all Canadians to follow the example of the students at Charlebois Community School to turn the promise of reconciliation into action within their communities.

Hiy hiy.

* * *

GUELPH AND DISTRICT MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, under sunny skies, thousands of people converged on Riverside Park for the 33rd Annual Guelph and District Multicultural Festival.

Local craft vendors, performers and food vendors shared their passion for art, culture and cuisine. On the main stage, performers shared their cultural music and dance, while from the giant food tent, people could tour the world, sampling food from 25 countries.

I want to thank the organizing committee, chaired by Anu Saxena, executive director Meher Parakh and the sponsors and many volunteers who make the event an amazing success every single year.

Canada was the first country in the world to adopt a multiculturalism policy. It is at the foundation of what makes Canada the true north strong and free country that we are all proud to call home. Canada needs to continue to be a compassionate, accepting and welcoming country that is an example to the world.

Statements by Members

●(1405)

AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, by an unhappy coincidence, it was four years ago today that I first urged the House to place automated external defibrillators, or AEDs, into all 5,600 RCMP cruisers. Based on the experience of other Canadian police forces, this would have saved the lives of over 300 heart attack victims a year, at a one-time cost of \$5 million, plus maintenance.

Four years have gone by and the RCMP has done nothing but invent excuses for its inaction. Therefore, 1,200 Canadians who would have been alive today are now dead. We could fill this room four times over with the bodies of those who died because we could not find the \$5 million.

On the other hand, we parliamentarians have had no trouble finding over 100 times as much, \$500 million, to renovate the building in which we meet today, and if estimates are right, we will spend even more on Centre Block. Could we take just 1% of that to save 300 lives next year, the year after and the year after that, or do we just not care?

* * *

HIGHLAND CREEK

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to honour the Highland Creek community in Scarborough—Rouge Park. Once the epicentre of residential and business activity in the former township of Scarborough, Highland Creek is now one of the last remaining historical villages in the city of Toronto.

Now in its 34th year, the Highland Creek Heritage Festival is a yearly highlight for local residents. It is supported by a number of key community institutions, including the Tony Stacey Centre for Veterans Care, Royal Canadian Legion Branch 258, St. Joseph's Parish, University of Toronto Scarborough campus, and countless local artisans and businesses.

I want to thank the Highland Creek Community Association and its president, David Adamson, for their leadership in bringing the community together. In addition to the festival, this organization puts together the annual Christmas tree lighting, community cleanups, fundraisers and much more.

The Highland Creek village exemplifies the very best of Canadian diversity. I invite all residents to join us on Saturday, June 15 at the Highland Creek Heritage Festival.

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INVESTMENTS IN SURREY CENTRE

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss some of the investments that have been made in Surrey Centre: \$7.5 million for SAFE, a proactive prevention and intervention program for 4,500 at-risk youth; \$60 million for a new RCMP forensic lab, opening later this summer; \$21 million for a new Surrey Central SkyTrain station; \$1.6 billion for the Surrey rapid transit line along the Fraser Highway; \$45 million for SFU Surrey's new \$125-million sustainable energy environmental en-

gineering building; and over \$200 million for our children through the Canada child benefit program, which assisted over 24,000 kids in Surrey Centre last year.

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to the constituents of Surrey Centre for allowing me to represent their voices in Ottawa. I thank Surrey Centre for allowing me to make Surrey the best place to live, learn, work and play.

* * *

DODGEBALL

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, dodge, dip, duck, dive and dodge. These are the five Ds of dodgeball.

However, a group of meddlesome academics has now said that dodgeball is a tool of oppression. This is a game as old and storied as recess itself. Who here among us does not remember the sting of a well-placed shot, the thrill of that critical catch, or the shame of crossing the centre line?

Dodgeball was an important part of phys ed, summer camp and recess, but now dodgeball in particular and fun in general are under attack. These ultra-woke busybodies are trying to throw a wrench in our fun.

In the immortal words of Patches O'Houlihan, "If you can dodge a wrench, you can dodge a ball." At Balgonie Elementary, I could dodge a wrench.

Dodgeball is not a tool of oppression. It is not part of some secret plot to reinforce gender identity or to abuse students. This is a game, and it is fun. To the fun police, we say, "Keep your hands off our dodgeballs."

* * *

●(1410)

[Translation]

LAVAL—LES ÎLES

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, never in living memory has a federal government worked so hard to deliver on its commitments, revive the economy and rebuild Canada's reputation, which was tarnished by the previous Conservative government.

Today, Canada is in the best financial position of all G7 countries. I want the people of Laval—Les Îles to know that I am proud to be part of the Liberal government team. Our government was elected to grow the middle class. Clearly our plan is working. The cherry on top is that the UN ranks Canada the seventh happiest country in the world.

Statements by Members

As my first term comes to a close, I will take this opportunity to say “mission accomplished” and to thank the people of Laval—Les Îles for their confidence and friendship.

Promises made, promises kept.

* * *

[English]

LUNG CANCER SCREENING STRATEGY

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network held a working breakfast to share concerns and ideas for cancer victims with MPs and senators. As a double cancer survivor myself, I truly appreciate their efforts.

Led by President Jackie Manthorne, the network ensures that patients and survivors obtain current knowledge about cancer treatment, options and outcomes.

Dr. Paul Wheatley-Price, medical oncologist at the University of Ottawa, told us about exciting new treatments that are already having a significant impact on the chances for a successful recovery from lung cancer. Dr. Wheatley-Price emphasized that there is standardized early testing for breast cancer, colon cancer and skin cancer, but there is none for lung cancer.

Dr. Wheatley-Price has asked parliamentarians to encourage the government to invest in a lung cancer screening strategy, and I think it is safe to say that parliamentarians will do just that.

* * *

[Translation]

2019 GENERAL ELECTION

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the election is just four months away and I am proud to say that the Conservative Party has almost finished recruiting its candidates. In Quebec alone, we have now chosen 85% of the 78 candidates. These men and women have backgrounds in various fields, including education, health, media, agriculture, municipal affairs, business and accounting, which God knows we are going to need to address the enormous deficit rung up by the Liberals and their Prime Minister.

We have an inspiring leader and a skilled, engaged and determined team. I am convinced that the quality of our team together with our ambitious, rigorous and responsible platform will more than meet Canadians' expectations.

We have never been more ready to resume governing. On October 21, we will start cleaning house.

* * *

SAINT-JEAN

Mr. Jean Rioux (Saint-Jean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, following its election, the government launched the largest infrastructure program in Canadian history.

Modern infrastructure forms the foundation for a strong economy and better communities. With this in mind, our government announced an \$82-million investment yesterday to complete High-

way 35, a critical piece of infrastructure that will improve the flow of people and goods between Montreal and Boston.

This government also brought university training back to the Royal Military College Saint-Jean, which was another strategic achievement.

Those are two commitments fulfilled by the Liberal government.

The Liberals' vision is about restoring hope for communities by delivering effective, necessary infrastructure. Our plan is working. Our targeted action is taking Canadian society to new heights. Since being elected, over one million new—

The Speaker: The member for Saskatoon West.

* * *

[English]

PHILIPPINES FESTIVAL IN SASKATOON

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Filipino community has left its mark in Saskatoon West, particularly in the neighbourhood of Confederation Park, a wonderful neighbourhood many Filipinos are proud to call home. As Canada celebrates our first official Filipino Heritage Month, this weekend I will be in Saskatoon for our city's first Philippines Festival. I cannot wait to participate in the festivities organized by the Filipino-Canadian Association of Saskatoon.

Mar Complido and Rosalee Apostol, president and vice-president of FILCAS, and the many volunteers from the Filipino community have been busy organizing the festival since December. After a flag-raising at city hall, the Cosmo Civic Centre will come alive, offering Saskatoon residents the chance to experience Filipino food, games, art and culture.

I am proud to say I was a member of the Parliament that voted unanimously to declare June as Filipino Heritage Month in Canada. To all our Filipino-Canadian friends in Saskatoon and across Canada, *salamat*. I will see them on Saturday.

* * *

● (1415)

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are getting hosed at the pumps, no thanks to this Prime Minister. Recently the Canadian press reported that rebates from the Liberal carbon tax are much lower across the country than had been promised. Canadians are feeling the increased costs on everyday essentials such as groceries, home heating and gasoline. That is a far cry from the Liberal leader's claim that eight out of 10 families will get more money back than they pay into his scheme.

Between all the ums and ahs and the confusing world of water bottles, Canadians are realizing they cannot believe anything this Liberal Prime Minister says. The proof is in the pudding with his “Do as I say, not as I do” attitude, as he jets around the world on more taxpayer-funded vacations, with zero regard to his carbon emissions.

Oral Questions

What he says and what he does never match. It is hardly a surprise that the Liberals' carbon-tax rebates are much lower than expected. Much like the Liberal leader, they are not as advertised.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I celebrate the enormous accomplishments of Canadians and our government on reaching a total of one million jobs since November 2015. With our government's vision, responsible spending and strong commitment to Canadians, this country was able to create 27,700 full-time jobs in May alone. This is what we promised and this is what we will continue to deliver for Canadians.

Growing the middle class is important to us, and we are making it possible. Thanks to the responsible, strategic investments that we have made in Canadians over the last four years, we have been able to achieve the lowest unemployment rate on record. Because of the benefits of skills training, the Canada child benefit and tax cuts to the middle class, this is felt in the lives of people in my riding of Labrador, but all across Canada it is helping families, just as advertised.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister at the beginning of his term said that he would strive to have a better relationship with the provinces.

Today we have heard from five premiers of provinces and one premier from a territory that they in fact have grave concerns about two bills that we are considering here. They have expressed their concerns with respect to investment in their provincial territories.

I would like to know whether the Prime Minister will heed the concerns of the premiers and accept the amendments from the Senate.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we believe in an independent Senate that makes its decisions based on the best interests of its communities. We will take a look at the amendments made by the senators. We will make a decision on which ones would improve the bill and make it better, and that is what we will be doing. That is what we believe in.

The fact that Conservative premiers have been threatening national unity if they do not get their way is completely irresponsible and needs to be condemned by anyone who aspires to be prime minister of this great country.

• (1420)

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with respect to relationships with premiers, regardless of political stripe, let us take a look at what the former Liberal premier of British Columbia has said about the Prime Minister: "When you're walking around thinking you're not first among equals but that you are the only one who has no equal, which is, I think, [the Prime Minister's] modus operandi when it comes to premiers, you've got a problem."

I would like to know from the Prime Minister if he will take the concerns of the premiers seriously regarding uncertainty in investment in their provinces and accept the full amendments from the Senate.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of our time in office as a government, we have engaged with the premiers in a constructive and collaborative way. For 10 years, Stephen Harper refused to even meet with the premiers at first ministers meetings.

The fact of the matter is that we believe in constructive relationships. Unfortunately, we do not consider it to be a constructive relationship when the premiers threaten national unity issues if they do not get their way.

We are going to make decisions on what is in the best interests of Canada. We will take a look at what the Senate—

The Speaker: Order. I am having trouble hearing the answer. I had no trouble hearing the question. Members, whether they like the answer or what is said here or not, should respect the right of members to have their say and should not interrupt.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these premiers represent 59% of the Canadian population and 63% of Canada's GDP. They are warning that these two bills would produce insurmountable roadblocks for major infrastructure projects and will jeopardize jobs, growth and investor confidence—and yes, they are pointing to their concerns about whether or not the Prime Minister is bringing on a constitutional crisis in this country.

Will the Prime Minister do the right thing, consider the amendments from the Senate and agree to every single one of them?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the amendments proposed by the Senate is to make indigenous consultations optional. I do not think Canadians want to go back to Stephen Harper's years of ignoring indigenous peoples in how we build resource projects. That is a good way to get nothing done, the way Stephen Harper did over 10 years.

We are going to take a good look at those amendments and move forward in a way that improves the bills.

What we will not do is accept the premiers saying there is a threat to national unity if they do not get their way. That is not the way to hold this country together.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Ontario, New Brunswick, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and now the Northwest Territories have just written an urgent letter to the Liberal Prime Minister calling on him to amend or withdraw Bills C-48 and C-69. The provinces simply want to be respected as the valuable partners that they are.

Oral Questions

When will this centralist and paternalistic Prime Minister consider these democratically elected provincial premiers and their governments as he should?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is irresponsible is for the Conservative premiers to say that national unity will be threatened if they do not get everything they want.

We have worked in partnership with the provinces from the start and have developed very good relationships with them. I find it unfortunate that the Conservative premiers are playing political games by speaking of national unity. I am pleased to see that Quebec is a partner when it comes to protecting the environment, but the Conservatives across the country are not doing anything to protect the environment and they are not listening to indigenous peoples.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's relationships with provincial governments and premiers are disastrous, and that is a fact. This centralist, paternalistic government constantly attacks provincial premiers at every opportunity.

As always, the Prime Minister's incompetence, sloppiness and stubbornness are a threat to national unity.

That raises a simple question: Will this government finally listen to our democratically elected premiers and their governments?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Conservative premiers are not the only ones talking about threats to national unity. Now, the member is saying that national unity will be threatened if they do not get their way and take this country back to where it was under Harper.

We are moving forward responsibly as we listen to environmental concerns and work in partnership with indigenous peoples because we know that is the way to move forward as a country. By raising the issue of national unity, the Conservatives are playing a reckless political game.

* * *

[*English*]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, small businesses, families, students and teachers, everyone needs access to the Internet and good cellular services. However, the Liberal and Conservative governments have allowed cellphone companies and telecom companies to gouge Canadians to the point that now they are making \$7.5 billion in profits. New Democrats have a plan to stop the gouging. We would place a price cap on cellphone bills.

Why have the Liberals failed to stand up to big telecom? Why have they failed to protect Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, when it comes to telecommunications, we have taken steps to support affordability, competition and consumer interests. We have seen encouraging steps in the right direction. Prices are up to 32% lower in regions with more competition, and there are now low-cost data plans, but we recognize that more must be done.

We have issued policy directives to the CRTC so that consumer interests must be considered when making decisions. We directed the CRTC to investigate high-pressure sales tactics, and we will continue to take action so that Canadians can get reliable and affordable telecommunications services.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): What in the world, Mr. Speaker?

[*Translation*]

Both Liberal and Conservative governments have let corporations rake in billions of dollars at the expense of Canadians. That is unacceptable. The time has come to stand up for Canadians. However, the problem is that the Liberals and the Conservatives are too cozy with these big companies.

When will the government put people before telecom companies?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are determined to ensure reliable, affordable telecommunication services across the country. Progress is being made. Prices are up to 32% lower in regions with more competition, and there are now low-cost data plans.

However, I recognize that more must be done. That is why we issued a policy directive to the CRTC which requires consumer interests to be considered when making decisions. We will continue to take action to ensure reliable, affordable telecommunication services.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are brave enough to stand up to big telecom when it comes to the services they provide. Access to cellular and Internet services is a necessity for students, teachers, families, Canadians and small and medium-sized businesses. Access is neither affordable nor reliable, however. We are brave enough to make better choices.

When will this government, the Liberals and the Prime Minister join us in lowering costs for Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, not only are we ensuring that there is more competition, but we are also investing across the country to ensure that Canadians have access to reliable telecommunication services. We have invested in high-speed Internet in rural areas and we have committed to installing more cell towers.

We are fulfilling our promise to ensure that all Canadians are better connected with more affordable access. We recognize that more must be done, but we have made huge progress in four years and we will continue to invest.

Oral Questions

[English]

FINANCE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, money laundering in B.C. and across Canada is one of the reasons housing has become so unaffordable, and it has also fuelled organized crime. Now we learn, according to new reports, that the member for Richmond's law firm facilitated a secretive transaction that may have helped a drug cartel launder money through a Vancouver condo development. According to experts, this type of deal should have raised huge flags.

Has the Prime Minister spoken to the member for Richmond about his law firm's potential involvement in money laundering?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are committed to a robust regime to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. In 2019, we created the action coordination and enforcement team and the money laundering centre of expertise, which will help better identify and meet evolving threats. We provided over \$150 million to the RCMP, to FINTRAC and to the CRA to support policing and real estate audit teams. Whereas the Conservatives cut over \$500 million from the RCMP's budget, we are ensuring that our law enforcement receives all the resources they need.

•(1430)

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's central bank says wage growth is sluggish. The people of Chicoutimi—Le Fjord feel like the cost of living is rising faster than their wages. They cannot afford a tax hike. The government is certainly not setting a good example by racking up mountains of debt. Everyone knows that, in order to finance their out-of-control spending, the Liberals are going to raise taxes.

When will the Minister of Finance admit it?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by reminding my colleague that 72% of Canada's debt was incurred by Conservative governments, including \$150 billion under Stephen Harper's government.

Before the Conservatives lecture us on fiscal restraint and balancing budgets, I think they have a lot to learn. What was their record? During their decade in power, Canada saw some of the weakest growth in its history. By contrast, in 2018, wages in Canada hit a 10-year high. Over the past three years, one million jobs have been created, and poverty has been reduced by 20%, something the Conservatives were never interested in doing for Canada.

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nearly half of Canadians are \$200 or less away from financial insolvency. Many say they could work more, but it is not worth it. They say that every hour of overtime gets swallowed up by the government. The Liberals are running massive deficits, and those deficits will have to be paid off.

What is the plan for balancing the budget?

[English]

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Youth Economic Opportunity), Lib.): Mr.

Speaker, I can tell you very clearly that our plan is not to follow the failed Conservative economic policies that led to the worst growth since the Great Depression and stagnant wages. Unemployment rates, we are now seeing, through our policies, are the lowest in recorded history. In addition to that, we are making investments and are seeing that through these investments, over one million new jobs are being created. There are lots of lessons from the Conservatives' economic record, but unfortunately, they were terrible, and we are not going to follow them.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, middle-class tax increases under the Liberals are starting to take their effect. The reality is that Canadians now face higher delinquency rates as a result of the government's policies, and half of Canadians are within \$200 every month of insolvency. Worse yet, the government will not rule out tax increases if it is re-elected.

When will they admit that if elected, the Liberals will impose new and massive tax increases to pay for their out-of-control spending?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Youth Economic Opportunity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the member opposite is frankly wrong. One of the first measures we introduced was lowering taxes for the middle class, making the Canada child benefit more generous and making it tax-free, something the Conservatives used to tax.

Again, we will continue to focus on Canadians. We are not going to follow the Conservatives' plan, who are taking marching orders from Doug Ford, which is cut now, think later. We are investing in Canadians, and as a result, our plan is working.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): No, Mr. Speaker, they are taking marching orders from the Prime Minister's mentor, Kathleen Wynne, who doubled Ontario's debt, doubled electricity costs and lied in four elections about Liberal plans to raise taxes on Ontarians. That is exactly what the Prime Minister is doing: driving up power bills, driving up the debt, and I cannot say the word in the House of Commons, hiding the fact that he is going to raise taxes if re-elected.

Why will he not admit those higher costs now, so Canadians can vote on whether they want to pay them?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Youth Economic Opportunity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is really sad that the Conservatives are attempting to rewrite history, but Canadians are not going to forget the fact that they added \$150 billion to the debt, and they had nothing to show for it. They had the worse growth since the Great Depression.

*Oral Questions***THE ENVIRONMENT**

We have reduced the unemployment rate to the lowest rate in recorded history, and as a result, a typical Canadian family is actually \$2,000 up per year. We will not follow the Conservatives' failed plans. It is time they started telling the truth to Canadians.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1435)

The Speaker: Order, please. There is far too much noise. Members need to show respect for this institution and for the right of others to say things with which they do not agree. It is kind of fundamental to democracy.

The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Well, Mr. Speaker, the truth is that during the great global recession, the Conservatives had the smallest deficits and the smallest debt of any country in the G7, and the Liberals, at the same time, said, "Spend more, spend now, spend faster." They said we should do like Kathleen Wynne, which was to lie in four elections about tax increases while doubling the debt and doubling power bills. That is exactly the strategy of the Prime Minister: to hide his tax increases until after the election, when he no longer needs Canadians' votes.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Youth Economic Opportunity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the Conservatives are now admitting that they think their \$150-billion debt was tiny. We do not agree with that. While they were increasing that debt, they were cutting support for seniors, for our veterans and for Canadians.

We invest in Canadians, and as a result, we see that we have the best growth and one of the best economies in the G7. Through these investments, in addition to that, we have created over a million jobs. I will continue to say it louder until the Conservatives wake up and understand that investing in Canadians is the only way to grow the economy.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Well, Mr. Speaker, the Liberals actually did think Conservative debts were tiny, because they kept asking us to make them bigger, and that is precisely what they have done since they took office. Following Kathleen Wynne, they are trying to drive up debt, which means future tax increases down the road, and they will not even deny it. Unlike Kathleen Wynne, they are not even hiding their plans to raise taxes again on the middle class.

If the government is not going to raise taxes, will the Liberals tell us how it is they are possibly going to erase their deficit without imposing higher taxes on Canadians?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Youth Economic Opportunity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our focus and our plan has been clear since day one: invest in Canadians, grow the economy and create an economy that works for everyone. We stopped sending cheques to millionaires, as the Conservatives did, and as a result, we have seen the growth rate increase. We have seen these investments working, with over a million new jobs created.

Let us remind Canadians of what Conservative cuts look like. Just look at Doug Ford in Ontario: cut now, think later.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after months of the NDP calling for a ban on single-use plastics, the Liberal government has finally announced a proposal that still does not name which plastics will be banned. Canadians are finding the Liberals' commitment to ban plastics hard to believe, when just last year, they handed a \$35-million grant to a company to expand plastics production.

When Liberals keep subsidizing the plastics industry, how can Canadians know that this is not just another empty promise?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was very happy yesterday to announce with the Prime Minister that we will be taking action to ban harmful single-use plastics. We know we have a problem. We have too much plastics in our oceans, our lakes and our rivers, and we can do better. We know that we can take action on plastic straws and plastic bags, that we can innovate and we can reduce our plastics.

I appreciate the member opposite's advocacy, but we are not just taking talk, we are taking action, and I am very pleased with what we did yesterday.

* * *

• (1440)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, so the Liberals say that they will ban single-use plastics at the same time as they are handing over tens of millions of dollars to increase plastic production. There is a word for this: utter hypocrisy.

The Liberals' approach to Trans Mountain has been equally hypocritical. First, they promised to change Stephen Harper's discredited process, and then they adopted it. They also pumped \$4.5 billion of Canadians' money into a pipeline project that is bad for the environment and the economy, and now they are talking about delaying announcing the rubber-stamped approval next week.

When will Liberals come clean with British Columbians and with Canadians?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this will be a good opportunity for the leader of the NDP to actually clarify whether he supports the \$40-billion LNG investment, the single-largest private sector investment in our oil and gas sector.

As far as the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion is concerned, we are in the process of concluding our meaningful consultations with indigenous communities and a decision will be made before June 18.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister changed the law to allow government-funded influencers to interfere in the election, once again using his power to try to rig the election.

The Chief Electoral Officer agrees that a campaign involving social media influencers is very politically sensitive.

Will the Prime Minister finally release the names of those influencers?

[English]

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know there is only one political party in this House, the Conservative Party of Canada, that does not want Canadians to vote. It also does not want Canadians to be informed about voting.

Canadians trust the Chief Electoral Officer, and let us take a moment to reflect on why the Conservatives do not. It is because they cheat, then they get caught cheating, and then they have to pay the consequences for cheating.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please.

I ask the hon. Minister of Democratic Institutions to be judicious in her comments and not accuse people of breaking the law.

The hon. member for Calgary Midnapore.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is ironic coming from a Liberal government that has no problem breaking the law. We have seen Liberal ministers exchanging cash for access, our current Prime Minister being the first in Canadian history to be found guilty of breaking ethics laws and the Prime Minister interfering in not one but two criminal prosecutions. Canadians are still waiting for the Liberals to return the money they stole in the sponsorship scandal. Now government-funded influencers urging people to vote risk the appearance of further political interference in the election.

When the Liberals tell us who they are?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when one breaks the law, one has to pay the consequences, as the Conservatives have time and time again. Let us go through the facts. In 2006, we saw the in-and-out campaign finance scandal that the Conservative Party eventually pleaded guilty to. In 2008, we saw the campaign finance irregularities in Peterborough that led to a member of Parliament going to jail. In 2011, we also saw the Conservatives mislead Canadians in terms of where to vote, and the list—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Members cannot expect the Chair to police things that cannot be heard.

Order, please.

The hon. member for Lévis—Lotbinière.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised a dirty election campaign and has stooped to a new low. He is letting his friends, third parties like Unifor and Engage Canada, do his dirty work for him.

The Liberals asked Unifor to distribute \$600 million to the media, and now it is returning the favour by launching an unprecedented, unfair multi-million dollar attack ad campaign against the future prime minister of our country, a campaign that circumvents the Canada Elections Act.

Why does the Prime Minister have such close ties with partisan interest groups? Is there a secret agreement? Canadians want to know the truth.

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said many times, there is only one political party in the House that does not trust our electoral system and democratic institutions. Canadians, however, do have confidence in them, as should all members of the House. The Conservatives are playing a dangerous game with our democracy.

We struck down the provisions of the legislation that were not fair to Canadians. It is important for Canadians to know how and where to vote. We do not need to change that.

• (1445)

[English]

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Toronto Raptors lost last night, but at the end of the game, the Prime Minister was smiling from ear to ear.

That is because anti-Conservative attack ads ran in prime spots during the game, and the Liberal Party did not have to spend a cent, because a special interest group called Engage Canada did its dirty work for it. Unifor has bragged about bankrolling Engage Canada to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

When will the Prime Minister stop stacking the deck, and finally kick Unifor off the panel that will decide which media outlets get \$600 million in government bailouts from these guys?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here we go again: another attack on unions. Why are the Conservatives so afraid of middle-class workers?

Let us remember this. Under the Harper regime, Conservatives waged a war on workers' rights. They made it more difficult for workers to organize freely, more difficult to bargain collectively and more difficult to work in safe environments. Unlike the Conservatives, we understand that unions are a partner, not the enemy.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, order. The hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope and others will come to order.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Jonquière.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, June 11, marks the 181th anniversary of my region, Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean.

We have been hit hard by all the trade disputes recently, and we are not out of the woods yet, considering the new NAFTA. As we have said over and over again, it is a bad agreement for dairy farmers and for workers, who will have no protections. This is quite the opposite of what the Liberals had promised when negotiations began. People expected a better deal, but instead they will be worse off.

How does the government plan to compensate those who will be affected by this bad deal, especially dairy farmers?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the NDP is playing a dangerous game.

The New Democrats seem to forget that initially they very much supported the deal. In fact, the NDP leader celebrated the deal at an event in Ottawa, and his Quebec lieutenant, the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, called the new NAFTA the best deal possible to protect workers across the country.

Now they are flip-flopping and want to open Pandora's box.

[*English*]

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, again, the minister called the new NAFTA a “win-win-win”.

Only Liberals would call increasing the cost of medication for vulnerable Canadians a win. Oh wait, now I know what she meant. I know who is winning. It is big pharma.

Are the Liberals so desperate to get a deal that they caved to Trump and big pharma again?

The PBO study on drug costs in the new deal revealed that it will cost \$169 million in the first year alone. Can the minister explain to Canadians suffering from Crohn's and diabetes why she wants them to pay more for their medications?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me quote Hassan Yussuff, president of the Canadian Labour Congress. He said that the new NAFTA “gets it right on labour provisions”.

Canada did its job. We negotiated a great deal for Canadian workers. I am astonished that the NDP, which claims to support working Canadians, is prepared, for the sake of scoring political points, to risk reopening this Pandora's box. I do not think that the car workers in Essex want that to happen.

* * *

• (1450)

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our economic plan is working in my riding of Cloverdale—Langley City and across Canada. On Friday, the numbers were released showing that British Columbia has the lowest unemployment rate in Canada and we are a leader in Canada's job growth. I know that employers and businesses in Cloverdale—Langley City

Oral Questions

are working hard to create jobs and keep our economy going. Could the minister of employment please tell my constituents what we are doing to support B.C.'s growth?

The Speaker: I ask the member for Cariboo—Prince George not to yell when someone else has the floor, no matter what. It is important that we hear others and what they have to say.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. You must not disregard directives from the Chair.

The hon. minister of employment.

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will say that confident countries invest in themselves. That is exactly what we have been doing since we were elected in 2015. While Conservatives continue to make cuts that hurt all across this country, we will always choose to invest in Canadians. We will always choose to create jobs and grow our economy.

Our plan is working. Canadians have created over a million jobs. We have the lowest unemployment rate on record, and wages have grown by 2.8%.

Our economy is growing. Our middle class is growing, and more Canadians are working than ever before.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, from day one, my province of Saskatchewan has been fighting tooth and nail against the Liberal carbon tax, because we knew all along that it was a scam. It turns out we were right. Not only are the Liberals charging the GST on top of the carbon tax, but residents in Saskatchewan are receiving significantly less than the Prime Minister promised through his so-called rebate.

When will the Prime Minister admit that, just like him, his carbon tax is not as advertised?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is really unfortunate that the Premier of Saskatchewan, who came to COP21 with me, does not understand the importance of taking action on climate change, that we can no longer make it free to pollute. We have given and done exactly what we promised. We put a price on pollution and are giving all the money back. A family of four will receive more under our plan. Over 80% of families will be better off. That has been confirmed by the Parliamentary Budget Office. However, just like Doug Ford, all the Conservatives have for climate is a sticker campaign and misinformation.

Oral Questions

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that Premier Moe would love to hear that. No matter how loud the environment minister said it and how many times she repeated it, Canadians have been totally misled on the Liberal carbon tax rebate scheme.

We now know that residents in New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario received much less than they were led to believe under the Liberal rebate scheme. What is true, however, is that every Canadian is now paying more in these provinces for the necessities of life because of the Liberal carbon tax.

Now that we know the truth, will the Prime Minister finally admit that his carbon tax is not as advertised?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really wish Conservative politicians would not say things that are false. We know that a family of four in Saskatchewan will receive \$609. That is every family of four in Saskatchewan. We have been clear about this.

What has not been clear, or maybe it is really clear, is that the Conservatives do not care about climate change. They do not care about taking the opportunity to have clean growth. Their big plan for the climate is to spread misinformation, mislead Canadians, not grow the economy and not do what is right for our kids.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change has told yet another whopper.

Let us play who is telling the truth. On the one hand, the Liberals have announced that Canada will meet its Paris targets and, on the other, institutions such as the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, the Climate Action network and even the United Nations are confirming that Canada will not reach these targets.

Who are we going to believe? The answer is obvious. Let us not forget that the Liberals have invested more than \$4 billion in a pipeline.

How can this government utter this falsehood and make Canadians believe the Liberals' talk about the environment?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is shocking to hear a Quebec member speak out against environmental action and climate change action.

We are working with the Quebec government, which has imposed a price on pollution. What is happening in Quebec? The economy is growing, there are good jobs and the clean technology industry is expanding. Quebec is doing the right thing for our children and grandchildren, which is to tackle climate change.

• (1455)

[English]

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's environment plan is spiralling out of control. We know

from his own officials that the Liberals will not meet their Paris targets. This comes as no surprise, because they do not have a climate plan; they have a tax plan. However, yesterday, we also found out that the Prime Minister's plan is a “drink box water bottles, sort of thing”. Those are his words.

When will the Prime Minister admit that he will not meet his Paris targets?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been clear. We need to take action on climate change. We need to grow our economy. What is also clear is that the party opposite is taking its marching orders from oil lobbyists. Conservatives do not believe that we need to take action on climate change. They want to kill Bill C-69, which would ensure that we are making decisions on environmental assessments on major projects based on science, based on indigenous consultation and ensuring that good projects go ahead in a timely way.

When will they get it that the environment and the economy go together in the 21st century?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Calgary Signal Hill should not be yelling when someone else has the floor. No member should do that. We should have respect for the right of members to speak. That can only exist if others are silent at the time.

The hon. member for Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River.

* * *

SENIORS

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Helen is a senior living in Meadow Lake. Every month, she goes a little more into debt, because she is on a limited income and has expensive medical bills. Now the CRA is going after Helen for back taxes she cannot afford to pay, yet the Liberals are giving up millions of dollars to big companies through tax loopholes created by the Conservatives.

Why is the government making life harder for seniors like Helen instead of fighting for their right to live with dignity?

Oral Questions

Hon. Filomena Tassi (Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to improving the lives of seniors, and we have been working very hard to do this. We have enacted a number of measures. We have restored the age of eligibility for OAS and GIS from 67 to 65, which has prevented 100,000 seniors from going into poverty. We have increased the GIS for the most vulnerable single seniors, which lifted 57,000 seniors out of poverty and had a positive impact on 900,000 seniors across this country. In budget 2019, we are also increasing the GIS exemption from \$3,500 to \$5,000 and for the first time including self-employed seniors.

We are going to continue to work hard for seniors.

[Translation]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yet my seniors' committee has told me how many of them struggle to pay for their medications and their rent. We should be working on making life more affordable for them. Instead, the Liberals are giving millions of dollars to big businesses because of loopholes. Lise, a 71-year-old senior in my riding, told me that all too often she feels that the Liberals, and the Conservatives before them, have forgotten about her.

Why have the Liberals chosen to help the wealthy instead of seniors?

[English]

Hon. Filomena Tassi (Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, with respect to the two measures, rolling back the OAS and the GIS and increasing the GIS, we have lifted or prevented over 150,000 seniors from going into poverty, but it does not stop there. We have also created the first-ever national housing strategy, with a \$55-billion investment to create safe, secure, affordable housing for seniors. We have invested \$6 billion into home care and palliative care. We have enhanced the CPP so that seniors of the future will get an increase of 50% on their CPP. There is also automatic enrolment for GIS and an investment of \$100 million into the new horizons for seniors program.

* * *

[Translation]

FINANCE

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the law firm of the Liberal MP for Steveston—Richmond East facilitated a bare trust deal for an alleged member of the Chinese cartel Big Circle Boys.

The deal was completed while Kwok Chung Tam was still serving a conditional sentence for a drug trafficking conviction.

We also learned that the British Columbia Law Society took control of the MP's law firm and that he is no longer a member of the society. Things are looking very bad for him.

Has that hon. member ever pressured cabinet members over money laundering?

• (1500)

[English]

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have the

opportunity to speak of our government's efforts to deal with the threat posed by money laundering to the security of the country and the impact it has on Canadians.

Through budget 2019, we are investing over \$162 million in restoring the capacity of RCMP, FINTRAC, CBSA and CRA to deal with this.

That was an ironic question received from the Conservatives, who cut the budget for those units. Under their watch in 2013, all 12 integrated proceeds of crime units across Canada were eliminated because they were underfunded and understaffed.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have learned that an alleged Chinese cartel drug boss used a Liberal MP's law firm to launder money through a B.C. condo purchase. The bare trust deal in 2011 allowed a key member of the "big circle boys" to conceal his investment of almost \$9 million in a B.C. property. That property flipped four years later for almost \$15 million.

Has the MP for Steveston—Richmond East ever lobbied members of cabinet on bare trust deals, mortgage rules, money laundering laws or FINTRAC reporting?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am so interested to see the new-found interest in the issue of money laundering by a government that eliminated nearly half a billion dollars from the law enforcement agencies that were tasked with keeping our financial instruments secure and maintaining the integrity of our finances. The Conservatives almost gutted the RCMP's capacity to do that.

As was recently discovered in British Columbia, as a direct result of these cuts, there were no dedicated resources for money laundering. We are reversing that. We are working closely with the Province of British Columbia. We are going to make a difference.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, bare trust deals are blamed for creating a veil of secrecy for international criminals trying to hide and launder proceeds of crime.

Oral Questions

A B.C. inquiry is expected to focus on a loophole that exempts Canadian lawyers from reporting suspicious transactions to Canada's anti-money laundering watchdog. Now we learn that the Liberal member's firm was seized by the B.C. Law Society in April, and he has been removed from the B.C. bar.

Are we really expected to believe that the member for Steveston—Richmond East has not lobbied cabinet and that the Prime Minister is not aware of this developing scandal?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I recall well that in 2012, the RCMP conducted an investigation into a lawyer who was involved in money laundering, a well-known Conservative supporter. I remember that at his trial after his conviction one well-known future Conservative cabinet minister gave character evidence on his behalf.

Our government has highlighted in a recent Department of Finance report a discussion paper toward working with the legal community in order to further explore how the legal community can address the issue of legal professionals being used to facilitate money laundering and terrorism—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Edmonton Manning will come to order. I have heard from him quite a bit today, but he has not had the floor.

The hon. member for Vimy.

* * *

[Translation]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in May, at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, I had the opportunity to speak with the Minister of International Development and Minister for Women and Gender Equality about the Women Deliver conference.

In my riding, Vimy, across Canada and around the world, women are concerned about gender equality.

Could the minister inform the House about the meaningful action that was taken during this historic meeting?

[English]

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of International Development and Minister for Women and Gender Equality, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, women of the world united with Canada to support a path where women will be leaders, equal in their communities, a path for equal pay and a \$12-trillion boost to the global economy. What I heard, loud and clear, was the rejection of those attempting to roll back our hard-won gains, including a woman's right to choose. Women have the right to decide their reproductive health. It is astounding that in Canada, in 2019, we continue to doubt the support of Conservative politicians for a woman's right to choose.

● (1505)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect the Liberals to approve the Trans Mountain expansion because they already approved it once before, back in 2016. In fact, construction was supposed to be done in the next six months, but three and a half years later, not a single inch has been built. Then the Liberals said that spending billions of tax dollars would get the expansion built “immediately”. That was more than a year ago. What exactly is the plan to ensure that construction of the Trans Mountain expansion starts in Burnaby on June 19?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the review process that was put in place by the previous Harper government led to a number of large infrastructure projects in the courts, where courts have determined that—

The Speaker: Order. It was very quiet when the question was being asked, and it should be equally quiet when the answer is being given, whether members like what they hear or not.

The hon. Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi: Mr. Speaker, it is very unfortunate that the Conservatives want us to follow the rules that led to a large number of projects being overturned by the Federal Court of Appeal. We are following the path forward that is given to us to ensure that we are engaging with—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Signal Hill, if he wishes to sing, can sing outside. Any more singing today, and he will be outside in a hurry.

The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the disaster that is the Phoenix pay system is affecting many workers in my riding, including those who work for Parks Canada. For example, Jean-Guy Lampron, a resident of Saint-Mathieu-du-Parc who works for Parks Canada, has not received a paycheque since March.

Meanwhile, the Liberal government continues to give millions of dollars to IBM, anxious to resolve this matter.

If the minister were not being paid, I am sure that he would have fixed the problem very quickly. Will the Liberal government commit to fixing this problem once and for all and pay—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is National Public Service Week, and I want to express our gratitude to our impressive public service.

Everyone in the House is committed to bringing the Phoenix transaction backlog down to zero. We will not do as the Conservatives did and lay off 700 public servants just to post some phony savings to create a phony balanced budget.

Oral Questions

We are committed to our public servants, and we are working hard to completely clear the backlog.

* * *

[English]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Port of Halifax plays a key role for businesses and employees in my riding of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour and to the economy of Atlantic Canada by moving Canadian products to international markets. Can the Minister of Transport please update all Canadians on the progress being made by this Liberal government to invest in good trade infrastructure?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour for his excellent question and his commitment to the Port of Halifax. We in the Liberal government believe in modern infrastructure for transportation and efficient trade corridors. It is good for the economy. That is why I was so pleased to announce two historic investments in the Port of Halifax to make it even more efficient and, incidentally, to reduce truck traffic in the Halifax area. We are all about creating good, middle-class jobs and growing the economy.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the charges may have been dropped in the Vice-Admiral Norman affair, but justice has yet to be served.

Under the Queen's Regulations and Orders of the National Defence Act, now that his name has been cleared, Vice-Admiral Norman should have been honourably returned to his position as vice-chief of the defence staff. However, that has not happened.

When will the Minister of National Defence do his job, uphold the law and order the chief of the defence staff to reinstate Mark Norman as our Canadian Armed Forces second in command?

• (1510)

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have stated, General Vance, as chief of the defence staff, has a responsibility. We should give him his space to have discussions with Vice-Admiral Norman in terms of his duties.

I have the utmost faith in the defence team and the leadership to move forward in a way that upholds the values and integrity of this great institution.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government says it wants to fast-track ratification of the new NAFTA. However, it is much less eager to compensate our supply-managed farmers, who have yet to receive a single penny for the two previous free trade agreements. The minister had promised them payments by June, but they have yet to receive anything, and they will not receive anything before the election.

Before asking for a blank cheque to ratify NAFTA, could the government not have the decency to send some cheques out to farmers?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was a Liberal government that created the supply management system and it is a Liberal government that is preserving it.

It is worth noting that the Americans' original goal was to completely dismantle that system. This agreement will provide access to markets, but the most important thing is that the future of supply management is secure. I can also assure my colleague that farmers will be fully compensated.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are still waiting for details. The problem is that people agreed to the last two free trade deals with the understanding that producers would be compensated, but they never got that money. They did not get a penny for CETA or the TPP.

Now the government wants to play the same trick on us a third time. It wants to ratify the agreement even though compensation details are not on the table. No way.

Does the government understand that no compensation means no ratification?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government's priority is defending Canadians' interests, and that includes the interests of dairy farmers. Our government stood up for our supply management system despite the United States' determined attempts to dismantle it.

I can assure all dairy farmers that they will receive fair and equitable compensation.

* * *

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Nunavut, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs.

Since it launched in 2011, successive governments have spent over half a billion dollars on the nutrition north program. In that time, the number of households in Nunavut affected by food insecurity has risen from 33% to over 50%. With results that bad, we should call it the Phoenix food program.

Nunavummiut wants answers. Will you open an inquiry into nutrition north so we can understand why it has failed so spectacularly and find a way to ensure food security for our communities?

The Speaker: I remind the hon. member for Nunavut to direct his questions to the Chair. Of course, when members say "you" in the House, they are referring to the Chair. I do not think he intended to do that.

The hon. Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations.

Business of Supply

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is completely unacceptable that many northerners are still struggling to feed their families.

Our government is expanding nutrition north to support a total of 116 isolated communities, although we know more needs to be done. We know that support for harvesters and access to the country food program are very important to northerners. We are very pleased that CanNor is also supporting pilot projects that will allow made-in-community solutions for those very communities about which the member talks.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of Her Excellency Deqa Yasin, Minister of Women and Human Rights Development for the Federal Republic of Somalia.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

DECORUM

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have found the heckling so bad in this corner that I even feel intimidated to raise the point that we are violating Standing Order 16 and Standing Order 18. People are yelling so loudly that I have trouble hearing the answers even with my earpiece. I know raising this makes me unpopular with those who yell, but I hope Canadians will know that some of us in this place value decorum and are actually embarrassed by the conduct of our fellows.

I plead with members to read the Standing Orders and follow them.

● (1515)

The Speaker: It does sometimes seem like few members have read the Standing Orders. I appreciate the hon. member's ongoing efforts to assist me in reducing the heckling in this place. It does seem like members are unable to be ashamed of their behaviour, that they have no shame and they ought to.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order on a matter arising out of question period. In the questions from member for New Westminster—Burnaby, he referred to the MP for Richmond. I am wondering if he could clarify that he was not referring to the Conservative MP for Richmond Centre, but to the scandal of the Liberal MP for Steveston—Richmond East. I would ask him to clarify that for us.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is correct.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The House resumed from June 10 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:15 p.m., pursuant to order made on Monday, June 10, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division relating to the business of supply.

[Translation]

The question is on the motion. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of motion to House]

● (1525)

(The House divided on the motion, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 1349)

YEAS

Members

Aubin	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Benson
Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boudrias	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brousseau
Cannings	Caron
Choquette	Donnelly
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseault	Duvall
Fortin	Garrison
Gill	Hardcastle
Hughes	Johns
Jolibois	Julian
Laverdière	MacGregor
Manly	Masse (Windsor West)
Mathysen	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Moore	Paupé
Quach	Ramsey
Sansoucy	Singh
Ste-Marie	Stetski
Trudel	Weir— 42

NAYS

Members

Aboultouf	Albas
Albrecht	Aldag
Alghabra	Alleslev
Allison	Amos
Anandasangaree	Anderson
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Badawey
Bains	Barlow
Barrett	Baylis
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Benzen
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Bittle
Blair	Block
Boissonnault	Bossio
Boucher	Brassard
Bratina	Breton
Caesar-Chavannes	Calkins
Carr	Carrie
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Chong
Clarke	Cooper

Cormier
 Dabrusin
 Davidson
 Dhaliwal
 Diotte
 Dreeshen
 Dubourg
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Easter
 Ehsassi
 Ellis
 Eyking
 Falk (Provencher)
 Finnigan
 Fortier
 Fraser (West Nova)
 Freeland
 Garneau
 Genuis
 Gladu
 Goodale
 Gourde
 Hajdu
 Hébert
 Hoback
 Holland
 Hussen
 Iacono
 Joly
 Jordan
 Kang
 Kent
 Khera
 Kusie
 Lambropoulos
 Lamoureux
 Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
 Leboutillier
 Liepert
 Lloyd
 Lockhart
 Longfield
 Lukiwski
 MacKenzie
 Maguire
 Martel
 May (Cambridge)
 McCrimmon
 McGuinty
 McKenna
 McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
 Mendès
 Mihychuk
 Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)
 Monsef
 Morrissey
 Murray
 Nater
 Ng
 Obhrai
 Oliphant
 O'Regan
 Paradis
 Peschisolido
 Petitpas Taylor
 Picard
 Poissant
 Ratansi
 Reid
 Richards
 Robillard
 Rogers
 Rudd
 Rusnak
 Saini
 Samson
 Sarai
 Scarpaleggia
 Schmale
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Shipley
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Simms

Cuzner
 Damoff
 DeCoursey
 Dhillon
 Doherty
 Drouin
 Duclos
 Dzerowicz
 Eglinski
 El-Khoury
 Erskine-Smith
 Eyolfson
 Finley
 Fisher
 Fragiskatos
 Fraser (Central Nova)
 Gallant
 Généreux
 Gerretsen
 Godin
 Gould
 Graham
 Hardie
 Hehr
 Hogg
 Housefather
 Hutchings
 Jeneroux
 Jones
 Jowhari
 Kelly
 Khalid
 Kitchen
 Lake
 Lametti
 Lapointe
 Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
 Lefebvre
 Lightbound
 Lobb
 Long
 Ludwig
 MacAulay (Cardigan)
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Maloney
 Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 McDonald
 McKay
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 McLeod (Northwest Territories)
 Mendicino
 Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
 Motz
 Nassif
 Nault
 Nicholson
 O'Connell
 Oliver
 Ouellette
 Paul-Hus
 Peterson
 Philpott
 Poilievre
 Raitt
 Rayes
 Rempel
 Rioux
 Rodriguez
 Romanado
 Ruimy
 Sahota
 Sajjan
 Sangha
 Saroya
 Schiefke
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Shields
 Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
 Sikand
 Sohi

Privilege

Sopuck
 Sorenson
 Stanton
 Stubbs
 Tabbara
 Tassi
 Trost
 Van Kesteren
 Vandenbeld
 Viersen
 Wagantall
 Waugh
 Whalen
 Wilson-Raybould
 Wrzesnewskyj
 Young
 Zahid

Sorbara
 Spengemann
 Strahl
 Sweet
 Tan
 Tilson
 Trudeau
 Vandal
 Vecchio
 Virani
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 Webber
 Wilkinson
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 Yip
 Yurdiga
 Zimmer— 246

PAIRED

Members

Fry
 Kmiec
 Plamondon

Goldsmith-Jones
 LeBlanc
 Thériault— 6

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

* * *

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

VIDEO RECORD OF HOUSE PROCEEDINGS OF JUNE 6, 2019

The Speaker: I have notice of a question of privilege from the hon. member for Banff—Airdrie.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when a tree falls in the forest and no one is around to hear it, does it really fall? That is the same principle by which I raise this question of privilege today.

On Thursday, June 6, during Routine Proceedings, I rose to table a petition. When I did so, I stated the following:

Mr. Speaker...Canadians depend upon the economic benefits and the jobs created by Canada's oil and gas industry. Unfortunately, without the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, there are thousands of unemployed Canadians who are worried about their next paycheque and where it will come from, instead of being able to plan for their families' future. With the carbon tax, even life's essentials have become a very costly burden.

Therefore, I table this petition calling on the government to immediately build the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion and repeal the carbon tax so we can get this country back on track and create opportunities for thousands of Canadians.

The problem was that it was not actually on the video of the proceedings of the House that day, nor were a number of other interventions that came before it. In reports from committees, the member for Avalon, the member for Bay of Quinte, the member for Scarborough—Guildwood and the member for Sydney—Victoria all presented reports from committees, and none of those were available on the video either.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons rose with a response to two petitions on behalf of the government. That was not recorded either. Nor was the petition presented by the member for Salaberry—Suroît.

Government Orders

We looked to see if the video was available. We intended to use it for social media, and it was not available on ParlVu. Everything prior to 10:09:52 that morning was not available. We reached out to multimedia services and information services at that time and were informed at 11:39 a.m. that day that the video would be made available after the House adjourned at 12:30 a.m. the following morning, June 7. That was the understanding we had at that time.

The next morning, we checked again. The video was still not available, and when we reached out to multimedia services and information services that morning, Friday morning, no response was ever received. No indication has ever been given as to why it was not made available or what the problem was.

Going back to the statement I made at the beginning about a tree falling in the forest, this is the same thing. In the days of social media, members often use the statements they make, whether it be presenting petitions, reports from committees or other interventions in the House, for those purposes. When they are not made available to a member to share with constituents or others, the question is whether privilege has been breached.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I ask for your ruling on this question of privilege. As members, does our right to be heard extend to our right to be heard on the video recording that is supposed to be made available for the public?

• (1530)

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Banff—Airdrie for raising this question. It is an interesting one. It raises the question of the ability of members to do their job in the House, and to that issue, of whether privilege extends to their ability to be involved in social media, which, of course, all members probably are these days, or perhaps their staff are on their behalf.

I will look at the matter and come back to the House.

I want to take this opportunity to remind members of the rules concerning questions of privilege. The notice submitted to the Speaker, which I received in this case, should contain four elements: it should indicate that the member is writing to give notice of his or her intention to raise a question of privilege; it should state that the matter is being raised at the earliest opportunity; it should indicate the substance of the matter the member proposes to raise by way of a question of privilege; and it should include the text of the motion, which the member must be ready to propose to the House should the Speaker rule the matter a *prima facie* question of privilege. That can be found on pages 144 and 145 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition.

It is important to raise that some of those elements were not fully covered in the letter, but I am going to accept the notice, because it is an interesting matter that I think ought to be taken under consideration. Moreover, the administration wants to ensure that it can provide the service of enabling members to have access to the video feed from the House. I will certainly look into the matter.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1535)

[*English*]

FISHERIES ACT

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.) moved:

That a Message be sent to the Senate to acquaint Their Honours that, in relation to Bill C-68, An Act to amend the Fisheries Act and other Acts in consequence, the House:

agrees with amendments 1(b), 1(c), 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14 and 15 made by the Senate;

respectfully disagrees with amendment 1(a) because it is contrary to the objective of the Act that its habitat provisions apply to all fish habitats throughout Canada;

proposes that amendment 3 be amended by deleting “guaranteed,” and, in the English version, by replacing the word “in” with the word “by”;

proposes that amendment 9 be amended by deleting section 35.11;

respectfully disagrees with amendment 11 because the amendment seeks to legislate in respect of third party, or market-based, fish habitat banking, which is beyond the policy intent of the Bill that is to provide only for proponent-led fish habitat banking.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is with great privilege that I rise today to speak to Bill C-68, an act to amend the Fisheries Act, which will restore lost protections to fish and fish habitat and incorporate modern safeguards into the law.

Before I highlight how Bill C-68 brings forward important improvements to the Fisheries Act, I would like to thank my predecessor, the Minister of Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs and Internal Trade, the member for Beauséjour. It is due to his leadership that we are here today debating this bill which, once passed, will fulfill a promise we made to Canadians in 2015 and will ensure that our fisheries are sustainable for future generations. We all wish the minister, our friend, a very speedy and full recovery.

On this note, I would also like to extend my thanks to Senator Christmas, who is the sponsor of the bill in the other place, for his work on moving Bill C-68 forward, for his commitment to the protection of fish and ensuring that the voices of indigenous peoples are well represented. I note that he made a number of amendments that will strengthen the indigenous components of the bill that we will be accepting.

I also want to thank the other place as a whole, in particular the committee, for its study of this bill.

[*Translation*]

Today, I will begin with an overview of the bill itself, and then I will speak to the amendments proposed by the Senate.

In summary, we will be respectfully rejecting the amendments in relation to the definition of fish habitat, as well as rejecting the three amendments related to third party habitat banking.

On a minor amendment, I have already sought the agreement of Senator Christmas to make a technical change to one of his amendments so that the language reflects what is already in the bill with respect to indigenous rights.

Government Orders

[English]

Canadians elected a Liberal government because they knew that the Liberal Party had a plan for growing the economy and for protecting our environment. Today, we are debating an important part of that plan. Bill C-68 will restore lost protections to fish and fish habitat and ensure that the government has the tools to manage our fisheries so that they are sustainable and healthy for future generations.

The previous government gutted the Fisheries Act, made cuts to science and reduced the number of fisheries officers. These are not the types of actions Canadians want and that, in part, is why those members are sitting on the opposite side of this chamber. The Conservatives have no plan for the environment and no plan to protect our fish and fish habitat. On the other hand, this government does have a plan and that plan is working.

Bill C-68 amends the Fisheries Act to fulfill our government's commitment to better protect Canada's freshwater and marine fisheries, helping to ensure their long-term economic and environmental sustainability. The amendments we are making will modernize the act. These amendments include a new purpose clause and considerations when making decisions under the act that will provide a framework for the proper management and control of fisheries and for the conservation and protection of fish and fish habitat, including by preventing pollution.

Factors to consider when making decisions with regard to potential harm to fish include the application of a precautionary approach and an ecosystem approach, community knowledge, indigenous knowledge, and social, economic and cultural considerations.

[Translation]

As well, key to the proposed changes to the act are the new requirements for stock rebuilding, which will introduce legally binding commitments to implement measures to manage Canada's major fish stocks above levels necessary to promote their sustainability.

• (1540)

[English]

Maintaining healthy stock levels and rebuilding those that have been depleted is critical to coastal communities and to their economic viability. That is why our government in the fall economic statement announced an investment of \$107 million over five years and \$17.6 million per year ongoing to support the implementation of these stock rebuilding provisions. There are a number of important fish stocks that have shown declines in recent years, which is why we have committed these funds to accelerate our actions to ensure sustainability. Over the next five years, this government is committed to making major fish stocks subject to the provisions on rebuilding.

Furthermore, key to the government's commitments are the measures for the protection of fish and fish habitat with respect to works, undertakings or activities that may result in the death of fish or the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat, or HADD. First, we have expanded the scope to apply to all fish and fish habitat. Second, we have removed reference to serious harm,

which, as many in the chamber know, was put forward by the previous Conservative government when it gutted the act in 2012. This new Fisheries Act will restore the application to HADD and would prohibit causing the death of fish by means other than fishing.

The new habitat provisions will also address major projects so that the proponents know which projects require permits. In response to industry concerns, we have also established codes of practice to guide best practices that minimize the impact on fish and fish habitat for smaller and routine projects. This will be especially critical for farmers and those in the agricultural industry who often undertake minor, routine works that relate to water.

Finally, the proposed Fisheries Act would enable ministerial regulations for the purposes of conservation and protection of marine biodiversity as well as the addition of other vital new tools, such as fisheries management orders, to quickly address threats to the proper management and control of the fisheries and the conservation and protection of fish.

Also, upon royal assent, the amended Fisheries Act will include a number of greatly needed updates, such as empowering the minister to establish advisory panels, set fees under the act and enter into agreements with indigenous governing bodies. Most importantly, the proposed legislation introduces a non-derogation clause as well as protections for indigenous knowledge when such information is provided to the government.

Bill C-68 also, very importantly, preserves the independence of our inshore fish harvesters by enshrining into law policies that support fleet separation. The legislation recognizes that when making decisions under the act, the minister can take into account social, economic and cultural factors, and the preservation and promotion of an independent inshore commercial fishery in Atlantic Canada and Quebec.

These amendments are critical if we want to ensure that our stocks are sustainable for future generations and for the communities from coast to coast to coast who depend on our fisheries and on the health of our oceans.

Under the former Conservative government, there was no plan to rebuild our depleted stocks, just like the Conservatives had no plan to protect our oceans. It is under this government that we have now successfully protected over 8% of our marine and coastal areas, up from less than 1% under the former Conservative government. We now have a clear path to achieving our 10% target by 2020.

Canadians know that this government has a plan that will protect our oceans all the while ensuring that our communities continue to benefit and that our economy continues to grow.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

This bill is a testament to meaningful engagement and consultations, and we heard from many Canadians, from coast to coast to coast. Consultations were extensive and public, on key issues for industry, non-governmental organizations, provinces and territories, and indigenous peoples across Canada.

During the fall of 2016, the department participated in more than 90 meetings with indigenous groups, communities and organizations, and resource management boards established under land claims agreements.

In the spring of 2017, there was a second phase of public engagement. During this second phase, Fisheries and Oceans Canada provided approximately \$900,000 to 89 indigenous groups to support their participation and engagement. The department also held over 70 meetings with indigenous peoples and nine more meetings with resource management boards, who, in turn, provided more than 170 written submissions.

● (1545)

[*English*]

The government has listened and has been responsive to many of the concerns that have been raised during parliamentary review. Both the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans and the other place have provided robust and very constructive recommendations, as well as amendments that have been supported by the government. With regard to some concerns raised by industry, particularly regarding the adoption of the amendment deeming water flow fish habitat, the government was responsive to concerns raised that the new definition's application could be unnecessarily broad and that the core intent was already captured in the bill. Consequently, the government agreed to the removal of the deeming water flow fish habitat provision from proposed subsection 2(2).

Industry also expressed concern about the provisions for the permitting of major projects under the proposed act. The government recognizes that regulatory certainty is important to industry and to Canadians and that designated project regulations may capture portions of projects that are not related to fish and fish habitat. Not all works, undertakings or activities that form part of a designated project require permits under the Fisheries Act, as many have no impact on fish and fish habitat. This is why we have introduced amendments from the government on designated projects, which gives the minister the ability to identify and make the final determination on which works, undertakings or activities will require a permit.

The intent of these amendments is to bring clarity to project proponents on which projects require a permit, and to avoid duplication with the federal impact assessment process. Providing greater certainty and cutting red tape while ensuring that fish and fish habitat are protected is very much the intent of this legislation.

This government, through Senator Harder, also proposed important amendments that were adopted by the other place that relate to two Senate public bills: Bill S-203 and Bill S-238. Bill S-203 is commonly referred to as the ending captivity of whales and dolphins act. Bill S-238 is commonly referred to as the ban on shark

fin importation and exportation act. These two bills respond to increasing public concern about the well-being of cetaceans held in captivity in Canada solely for public display, as well as concerns about the impact and the nature of the practice of shark finning. I am pleased to say that the government shares these concerns and is demonstrating leadership on these issues.

[*Translation*]

This government believes that the practice of keeping whales in captivity solely for the purpose of public display should be phased out.

I believe that the amendments proposed to Bill S-203, and the coordinating amendments in Bill C-68, will help us effectively phase out and restrict the captivity of whales.

[*English*]

Bill S-238 proposes to amend the Fisheries Act to prohibit the practice of shark finning and to amend WAPPRITA to prohibit the import and export or the attempt to import or export into and from Canada of shark fins or parts of shark fins that are not attached to a shark carcass.

The intent of the proposed amendments to Bill C-68 related to shark finning is consistent with the legislative policy objectives of Bill S-238 to address the practice of shark finning, which is the practice of removing fins from sharks and discarding the carcasses at sea. There is no doubt that shark finning and the illegal trade in shark fins have had a devastating impact on global shark populations. In fact, over 63 million sharks are killed every year, many for the global shark fin trade.

[*Translation*]

Canada has demonstrated international leadership on the conservation and management of sharks and was one of the first countries to develop a national plan of action in that regard. Canada continues to work with its partners, including regional fishery management organizations, to adopt effective management measures to regulate the capture of sharks in both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

Without these amendments in Bill C-68, Bill S-238 is likely not going to pass due to the short time remaining in this sitting. This amendment will ensure that shark finning and the export and import of shark fins will be banned in Canada.

● (1550)

[*English*]

I would now like to turn to the proposed changes from the other place to Bill C-68.

Government Orders

The first amendment that we will be respectfully rejecting was made by Senator Poirier in relation to the definition of “fish habitat”. Senator Poirier’s amendment would change the definition of “fish habitat” from “water frequented by fish and any other areas on which fish depend directly or indirectly to carry out their life processes, including spawning grounds and nursery, rearing, food supply and migration areas” to “any area on which fish depend directly or indirectly to carry out their life processes, including spawning grounds and nurseries, rearing, food supply and migration areas”.

The original text of “water frequented by fish”, in addition to “areas on which fish depend directly or indirectly on”, increases the scope for the application of the fish habitat protection provisions. By removing “water frequented by fish”, this amendment goes against the objective of the bill to provide greater protection to fish and fish habitat across Canada. Therefore, we will not be supporting this change.

With regard to another proposed amendment, as part of the changes initially proposed, the government introduced provisions that would allow for proponent-led habitat banks. The department has been encouraging proponent-led habitat banking since 2013. Bill C-68 would enshrine this policy approach into law and provide new incentives to use habitat banking credits to offset impacts on fish and fish habitat caused by human activity. This represents an important evolution in the implementation of measures to help improve the conservation of fish and fish habitat.

Some stakeholders and senators have argued that we should go further, by expanding habitat banking to third parties and to allow cash payments in lieu of offsetting. Expanding habitat banking to third parties would allow any organization to earn credits through restoration or conservation projects. These credits could then be sold to project proponents that do not wish to create their own offsets prior to project development.

Payments in lieu of offsetting would allow project proponents to pay a fee up front instead of investing in offsetting projects prior to development. The intention is that revenues from these payments would be dedicated to aquatic habitat restoration. Third party habitat banking has its merits and is currently practised in some countries, including the biodiversity banking and offsets scheme in Australia and the wetlands mitigation banks in the United States.

However, there are important considerations and actions that we need to undertake prior to establishing third party habitat banking and fees in lieu of offsetting regimes here in Canada. First, it is the government’s view that in order to offset the residual impact from a project, conservation projects created to acquire habitat banking credits need to benefit the specific fish populations and areas that would be affected by that project.

[Translation]

Second, this government believes that where aquatic species at risk are present, opportunities to undertake conservation projects involving the creation, restoration or enhancement of the habitat of aquatic species at risk should be given priority.

[English]

Third, in the freshwater and inland areas of Canada, provinces own the land and are responsible for resource management. In some

cases, indigenous communities or governments may be responsible for resource management. Since habitat banks could certainly implicate these lands, the creation of a habitat bank requires that implicated stakeholders be consulted regarding the area in which the bank would be created. Consultation with other federal departments, provinces, territories, indigenous groups and landowners would be necessary to establish agreements to authorize these transactions. Due to these considerations, the proposed amendments to Bill C-68 to expand habitat banking would require regulatory initiatives that would, if not properly designed, present risks to the conservation community, indigenous groups and other land or rights holders.

In summary, although third party habitat banking and fees in lieu of offsetting are schemes that have significant potential for application in Canada, those in comparative jurisdictions are based on complex and lengthy legislative and regulatory framework development. The current proposed model is inadequate in this regard and would likely result in unintended consequences in its current form. Further, any such provisions certainly would require significant consultations with provinces, territories and others.

Due to the legal complexity and public policy considerations that the government would need to address prior to establishing and implementing such regimes in Canada, we will not be adopting the habitat banking amendments proposed by the other place. However, going forward, the department will commit to evaluating the performance of proponent-led habitat banks and to assess offsetting policies adopted elsewhere, including third party habitat banking and payment in lieu of offsetting.

Additionally, in light of the discussions on third party habitat banking as they relate to Bill C-68, I have asked the House fisheries committee to study this issue. This government has always been of the view that polluters should pay. It simply should not be free to harm our environment. I believe there is significant merit in further examining third party habitat banking.

I would also note that the Canadian Wildlife Federation, which proposed these amendments through Senator Wells and which does great work advocating for the protection of wildlife habitat, has indicated its support for the removal of the these amendments at this time. It understands that more work needs to be done before we can move forward fully in this area. In addition, we are making a technical amendment to an amendment made by Senator Christmas to ensure that the language used with respect to section 35 rights, as well as aboriginal treaty rights, is consistent with language used in the rest of the bill. I have spoken to Senator Christmas about this amendment and he has agreed to this change.

Government Orders

•(1555)

Bill C-68 is restoring lost protections that Canadians elected this government to do. Changes in this bill will help rebuild fish stocks and in turn support the communities that depend on them.

When the Conservatives were in government, they did the opposite. They watered down fish and fish habitat protection when they gutted the Fisheries Act in 2012, and they made deep cuts to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans by slashing the operating budget by \$100 million. They also made staff cuts to critical areas, such as the Pacific region habitat management program, which helped support the management of our wild salmon.

I am proud to be part of a government that is taking the right approach when it comes to protecting our environment and our fish stocks. That is why last fall, in partnership with the Government of British Columbia, I announced \$142 million to create the B.C. salmon restoration and innovation fund to support the B.C. fish and seafood sector, and to ensure the sustainability of wild Pacific salmon and other B.C. fish stocks. This government has also invested in science, small craft harbours across the country and whale research. As many Canadians know, it was this government that invested \$1.5 billion in the oceans protection plan that has supported research, opened new rescue boat stations, increased Coast Guard capacity and restored coastal habitats. Canadians can count on this government to make the right investments in our environment while growing our economy and creating good middle-class jobs.

This bill has also been before both chambers for over a year now. The Conservatives will say that their move backward in 2012 to reduce protections may not have had a negative impact on the environment; they will argue that their changes were somehow merited.

Canadians know not to wait until stocks collapse before taking action. Canadians know that the Conservatives do not support science or a precautionary approach. That is why, under their watch, they muzzled scientists and made dramatic cuts. Canadians know that Bill C-68 will help protect our fish and fish habitat and is an important piece as we move forward with a plan that will protect our biodiversity, oceans, and ensure our fisheries are sustainable for future generations.

It is truly time to get on with passing Bill C-68. In response to the message from the other place, we are accepting many amendments, while rejecting just three amendments and amending one. Again, the Canadian Wildlife Federation that originally proposed the habitat banking amendments, through Senator Wells, has indicated its support for the removal of that amendment. I would also note that Senator Wells was one of just three senators who voted against the bill, effectively against the very amendments he put in at third reading. Further, as I had indicated, Senator Christmas supports the minor technical amendment that we are proposing.

I certainly hope that all members in this chamber can join with me in ensuring quick passage of this bill, so that our fish and their habitat can be assured of the protection they so desperately need.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to waylay some of the comments made by the hon. minister.

Early in this parliamentary session, I could see that the Fisheries Act was going to be up for possible review and debate, so I put in an Order Paper question, No. 626. I asked the government for any proof of harm or habitat destruction, any loss that might have been created through the 2012 changes in the the Fisheries Act. The answer we received back on that Order Paper question was basically zero: no proof of harm whatsoever.

How can the minister mislead the Canadian public by saying there was a loss of protection when the government cannot prove it when asked to do so in an Order Paper question? It is an absolute farce, and he should correct his statement.

•(1600)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the hon. member referenced doing that in this session. He should be aware that was a conversation we had in 2015. It was a major campaign commitment on the part of the Liberal Party during the campaign to restore the protections that were lost when the previous government gutted the protections in the Fisheries Act. It was certainly something that Canadians understood and were very concerned about. However, it was in the context of a broader destruction that was wrought by the previous government in terms of science and cuts to the department, cuts to the enforcement branch of the department, so that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans had far less capacity to do its work.

Canadians know that ensuring, on a go-forward basis, that we have a sustainable fishery requires investments in science. It requires protection so that industrial development is done in a manner that can be consistent with ongoing rebuilding of our fish stocks and the maintenance of a sustainable fishery. Canadians know that in the modern world, we need to have an environmental plan as well as an economic plan. This government has one, but the previous one did not.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to offer my support for Bill C-68 on behalf of my constituents who widely condemned the previous Conservative government's changes to the Fisheries Act. I am glad to be able to stand in this place and to fix the damages of the past.

That being said, however, I am very disappointed with the minister supporting Senate amendments 1(c) and 7 with respect to environmental flows. He should know why I am disappointed about this. It is because of the Cowichan River and the Jordan River in my riding. Yesterday, the Cowichan River was reported to be flowing at a rate of five cubic metres per second. This is in early June.

Government Orders

I do not know how the minister can stand in this place and not recognize that environmental flows are critical to fish habitat. I was on the river last month, helping to rescue salmon fry. There are huge swaths of the river that are now being affected. Loss of habitat is very widespread. We had a golden opportunity in this legislation that was passed by the House to have environmental flows enshrined in the legislation.

The minister knows that this is a big problem for rivers on the coast. I do not know why he is supporting that when the evidence is abundantly clear that environmental flows are absolutely critical to maintaining proper fish habitat.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his support of the bill and for his comments.

I would say a couple of different things on the issue. The issue that he raises is one that we have had many conversations about. We are both actively working to try to find a resolution to that issue. It is an important issue with respect to fish and fish habitat, on an important river in British Columbia for wild Pacific salmon.

The bill, as it stands, with the reinstatement of the protections for fish and fish habitat, very much covers those kinds of issues. On the particular issue that the hon. member raises, the stumbling block has been a water licence issue. We are working actively with the Government of British Columbia and with the hon. member to try to ensure that we address that.

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. minister for introducing this in the House today. As he said, it is time to get it done. He is right: It is time to get it done. It has been long enough.

I also want to thank the former minister as well. During the committee's review of the legislation, one thing we wanted to have enshrined in the Fisheries Act was the owner-operator policy, which I know many fishers in my province wanted to see in the Fisheries Act. As well, union representatives and organizations, such as the FFAW and FISH-NL, wanted to see that there as well.

Would the minister comment on how important it is to see that policy enshrined in the Fisheries Act?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, it is very important for fish harvesters. Certainly they have made that abundantly clear in the conversations they have had with me.

It is an important initiative on behalf of the government to strengthen owner-operator and fleet separation through Bill C-68. It is an integral set of policies for underpinning our coastal communities and the economic viability of our coastal communities. We are very pleased to be moving forward with something that we think is extremely important for many Atlantic Canadians and fish harvesters in Quebec.

It will be a happy day for all of us when we get that done and passed.

• (1605)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, if other jurisdictions, including the United States, are able to bring in effective third party habitat banking systems and programs, why is that Canada cannot do that?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, it is not that we do not intend to bring in that kind of a mechanism; it is certainly something that we are interested in. As I said, I have asked the parliamentary committee to have a look at that. We will, internally, be looking at other jurisdictions.

There are a number of issues associated with doing it in the short term. However, perhaps the most significant of those is the fact that habitat banking will directly involve provincial land, and in some cases, indigenous lands. In order for us to work on a federal-provincial basis, co-operatively and collaboratively with our provincial partners, we would not be doing our job and we would not be respecting provincial jurisdiction if we did not work though this with them. That is certainly something we will be having conversations about, as early as this summer, when we meet with the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans for his speech. New Democrats will be supporting the passage of the bill. It is an important piece of legislation.

I would like to thank him for the part of the legislation related to shark finning, and I certainly thank my good colleague and friend from Port Moody—Coquitlam for his bill on ending the import and export of shark fins. It is very important. It is nice to see that he has been able to roll it into Bill C-68. We have heard from Canadians from coast to coast to coast that they want to see an end to that practice.

One thing that concerns me is that there are no provisions here about aquaculture. It is a concern the minister has heard from me recently. I want to thank him for taking steps to commit to testing for PRV in fish on salmon farms, but we do not have answers on what will happen if fish test positive.

Has he made a commitment that fish will not be transferred to open-net fish farms should their tests have a positive result? He knows how important this is to coastal communities, and they are calling for this to stop.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, I want to acknowledge the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam and the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, who were the original sponsors of both Bill S-203 and Bill S-238, which have now been incorporated into Bill C-68.

With respect to the question on aquaculture, last week we brought forward framework documents to develop and consult on how we assess risk on a go-forward basis. We concurrently implemented an additional step in the precautionary approach with respect to testing for strains of PRV and for specific illnesses that may exist within the net pens. The results will feed directly into the risk management framework that we have developed over the course of the last number of months.

As I said, we are inviting comment over the coming couple of months on the risk management framework to ensure we get this right in moving through the scientific process to make those determinations.

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Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the minister's reference to my sponsorship of Bill S-203. I was also the mover of the amendment that led to the water flow provisions on habitat. I agree with the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford that it is a shame to see those lost.

I want to make this one point in 10 seconds: This bill has to pass. I wish I had not lost my section on water flows, but we have to move Bill C-68 through.

Does the hon. minister think we have time to move the amendments through the Senate and back to this place?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, yes, I believe there is time. It is a very high priority for the government. We will be working actively to ensure that the bill is passed.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to stand in the House and speak to the Senate amendments to Bill C-68.

I listened intently as the minister did whatever he could, every step of the way, to disparage the previous government while trying to prop himself and his department up along the way. This comes from a minister who took credit for a Coast Guard vessel just last week on social media. He said that the Liberal government did this, but it was our former Conservative government that did it. It is very disingenuous for a minister to use his time to continue to slander and disparage the previous government.

I have said time and again, very publicly in this House and at committee, that consecutive governments, including Liberal governments, should take blame for where our fisheries stocks are. When questioned as to why our fisheries stocks are at critical levels, there are bureaucrats who have been in their positions for 20-plus years who have consistently told every government that they promise to do better. It is quite shameful that this minister would stand up here and trumpet that the Liberals are moving the ball. I will provide proof in my speech that they are not.

Today we are here to talk about the Senate amendments to Bill C-68, which is essentially a flawed piece of legislation. We saw that it was flawed when it was first introduced. Unfortunately, again the government put time allocation on the bill. I believe at that time it was the 40th time the Liberal government had done that, the same government that is led by the member for Papineau, who, during the 2015 campaign, said that his government would let the debate reign and would not resort to parliamentary tricks, such as invoking time allocation.

Here we are today, and I think it is now over 70 times that time allocation has been used. We have not seen time allocation on this bill up to this point, but the day is still early.

I will return to the Senate amendments. Early last week, the Senate sent back 15 amendments to Bill C-68 on about four different topics. As mentioned earlier, they cover inshore fisheries and habitat banking. Bill S-203, which is the bill that would end keeping whales in captivity, was rolled into Bill C-68, as well as Bill S-238, which is the shark finning bill put forward by a Conservative senator. I will get back to this shortly.

It was interesting when the department was before our committee recently regarding Bill S-238. The officials mentioned that while we would be banning shark fins unless the fin is attached to the shark carcass itself, the importation of shark fin soup was still going to be permitted. The department has committed to getting back to us and double-checking that, but the comment we received from the official when he was asked and pressed on it was that “soup is soup.”

Here we are now, talking about the Senate amendments to Bill C-68. Bill C-68 was introduced early last year and, as mentioned, is a piece of flawed legislation. During the 2015 campaign, the Liberals promised to restore the definition of “harmful alteration, disruption or destruction” of fish habitat. From this point, I will refer to that as “HADD”. I mention that for the Canadians watching from coast to coast to coast, as well as for those in the gallery, which is full once again today.

● (1610)

As the Liberals put it, they wanted to restore the lost protections implemented by our previous Conservative government. As a matter of fact, I will use the term that our minister just used, that the Conservatives “gutted the Fisheries Act”. That is what he was saying, and that is shameful. That is the same eco-warrior language, shamefully, that the government used in 2015 to tarnish any of the great work that our previous Conservative government did. As well, cabinet ministers and members of the current government have used this language to disparage some of our natural resource companies, such as mining and oil and gas, and, again, our former Conservative government.

The fisheries committee did an extensive study on the so-called “lost protections” in the changes that were made in 2012 to the Fisheries Act under our previous Conservative government. Not one group and not one witness could provide any evidence that there were lost protections that resulted from the changes in 2012—not an academic, not an environmental group, not a scientist. I will get into that more throughout my speech.

Not surprisingly, the government has capitalized politically with these environmental groups and the public at large with this proposed legislation. The Liberals have positioned themselves as the defenders of the environment, and restoring the imaginary lost protections has garnered positive support through various media outlets. This is the same government that continues to approve the dumping of millions of litres of raw sewage into our waterways, yet here they are defending their actions, standing up and disparaging those who are opposing what they are saying. They continue to this day to approve the dumping of millions of litres of raw sewage into our waterways. Canadians should be paying attention.

Government Orders

We oppose Bill C-68 because of the HADD provisions, but there are some positive aspects of the bill. It potentially has some good points. We have always said that Bill C-68 is a bill that we will repeal and replace, and that we will bring stakeholders around the table and build a piece of legislation that truly represents the intent of Bill C-68.

On the 15 reasoned, responsible amendments that the Senate sent back, the Senate did its job. It attempted to fix an omnibus piece of legislation that should have probably been split into two or three different bills, and there is another broken promise.

I believe it was in the Liberal 2015 campaign, and probably it was the same day when the member for Papineau said that he was not going to resort to such parliamentary tricks as omnibus bills. Well, here we are, and Bill C-68 is one of those. He has not let the debate reign. Time allocation has been seen time and time again.

The amendments focused on changes to the Fisheries Act, such as the owner-operator fleet separation, which, as my hon. colleague across the way mentioned, the fisheries committee has heard about time and again. The bill also talks about habitat protection and habitat banking, and it rolls in Bill S-203 on cetaceans in captivity and Bill S-238 on shark finning.

Bill C-68 introduced habitat banking as a means by which companies could restore waterways affected by development. As an example, when I was in aviation, we built one of Canada's largest runways. To be good neighbours, we noticed during our environmental assessment that there was a potential area for waterfowl or the western spadefoot toad.

● (1615)

Therefore, we had a toad rodeo. We looked to find how many toads were in that certain area that was designated or that could be environmentally sensitive. We also looked for the water fowl that could be present in those wetlands. To be good neighbours, we worked with Ducks Unlimited Canada, the conservation group. We are not the experts in this. We needed somebody to tell us what would be more appropriate, and we wanted to make sure that if there was going to be displacement, it would be within our region. We worked with Ducks Unlimited and other local groups. We found an area that was suitable, and we committed and purchased that area. That is an example of what habitat banking is.

There are concerns with moving down the way in terms of habitat banking, as well as, let us say, carbon credits. It is very similar to carbon credits.

As I was running for election in 2015, I was interested to find that we have offshore companies, European companies, that were buying up huge swaths of agricultural land in my riding. They were literally showing up to a farm and offering suitcases full of money. Many of our farmers are long-time generational farmers and do not have that next generation coming in. Who can blame them, if they have this opportunity present itself? The companies told a good story. Very quickly after purchasing the land, they mowed under all that agriculture potential. They were buying it for carbon credits to be applied in other countries. We cannot create more land; we are not able to do that. We put a stop to that.

Therefore, the habitat banking provisions that the Senate tried to fix with its amendments dealt with third party offset payments and they would keep the restored habitat closed. Habitat banking is a market-oriented approach to environmental conservation. As a matter of fact, we are starting to see this more and more. When I was in aviation, "carbon credits" was the buzzword. It was carbon credits this and carbon credits that. Every passenger who was flying on an airline had an opportunity to buy carbon offsets as part of his or her ticket. A habitat bank is now the next generation of a very similar type of market-oriented approach to environmental conservation. A habitat bank is defined in the bill as "an area of a fish habitat that has been created, restored or enhanced by the carrying on of one or more conservation projects within a service area and in respect of which area the Minister has certified any habitat credit".

A habitat credit, before being amended at committee, was defined in the bill as "a unit of measure that is agreed to between any proponent and the Minister under section 42.02 that quantifies the benefits of a conservation project." In plainer language, the old version of the bill stipulated that the proponents, and only the proponents, can offset the adverse effects on fish or fish habitat as a result of conservation work being done by the proponent. That leaves out important third party conservation groups and indigenous groups.

● (1620)

I do not know of too many mining or forestry companies that are experts in conservation projects. If a mining operation leads to deleterious effects on fish habitat, for example, that mining company may offset the impacts of those effects through a conservation project, like moving affected fish to another pond. Other examples include the construction of a salmon ladder, preservation of a wetland, as I described with our airport, or any other measure that creates, restores or enhances a fish habitat. Ensuring that proponents offset their impacts on fish habitat is necessary for environmental conservation. We all agree with that.

There is not a single compelling reason to restrict habitat banking solely to proponents. When we say that only a proponent can create a habitat bank, we are excluding first nations groups and conservation specialist groups like Ducks Unlimited or wetlands advocates. We are also excluding municipalities, among other prospective participants. These stakeholders all want to be on the front lines of habitat restoration and enhancement, and they should be. Not all proponents have the expertise, resources or knowledge to build a physical offset.

Government Orders

We all know that the balance of power in the Senate rests on the independent side, which we know is the government side. Under the amendment passed by our senators, proponents would now be able to purchase the credit rather than designing and building their own physical offset. The offset must still be created, but now it could be created by a group with a specific conservation expertise. In these cases, the proponents would essentially be funding the construction of an approved physical offset. The proponents would say, “We understand that our project has displaced fish, wildlife or aquatic species, and we will work to make amends. However, we are not the experts on this, so let us partner with an approved group to get this done.”

It is a win-win for industry and the environment. Companies do not have to divert their attention from the core aspects of their business and creating the jobs that come with it; all they have to do is buy the credit for the habitat bank established by a third party group. With a new market for the credits, there is an incentive for third parties to get into the habitat banking game, thus leading to additional biological protections.

The second amendment the Senate sent back on this issue relates to the offset payments. This amendment would allow the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to collect and offset payment in lieu of establishing and offsetting a habitat bank. The purpose of introducing this tool, as argued by the Canadian Wildlife Federation and others, was to provide the flexibility in areas where an appropriate offset project is not available or cost-effective. That makes sense.

As an alternative to purchasing credits, proponents could pay into a habitat protection fund, for example the environmental damages fund, to offset any impacts their project may have. Under this amendment, funds would need to be spent as close as practicable to where the work, undertaking or activity is located, or at least within the same province where such work occurred. If the displacement or impact is taking place in a region such as Cariboo—Prince George, I would like to see that habitat banking take place right in my riding. I would have to say that it has to be done there. We do not want to see these other companies coming in and doing something similar to what we mentioned earlier with the carbon credit program. If that displacement is taking place in an area such as Cariboo—Prince George, then an appropriate project should be found in the same region. I would suspect there are a lot of conservation projects that could benefit from this type of program.

• (1625)

Adding these parameters to the system was imperative to ensure equal treatment among all provinces, territories and, hopefully, if administered accurately by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, among watersheds as well.

This amendment does not mandate how the government should collect or spend the money. It simply establishes a structure by which private sector funds, determined and accepted at the discretion of the minister—again, it is all about this minister having all the power—can be used to support restoration projects in Canada. It makes sense to me.

The third amendment on habitat banking shares the spirit of the second, but it is entirely distinct among the three, and here is how.

Bill C-68, in both its current and former iterations, specifies that certified habitat credits must be used within a service area. A service area is defined in Bill C-68 as “the geographical area that encompasses a fish habitat bank and one or more conservation projects and within which area a proponent carries on a work, undertaking or activity.”

The broadness of that definition was concerning. As currently written, a service area could technically be considered the whole country. For discussion purposes, let us say that SNC-Lavalin, working on a project in Quebec, is deemed to have done some damage to fish or fish habitat or is looking to buy some habitat banking credits, but it also does work in Vancouver, Toronto or other areas. It could apply those habitat banking credits to those areas, not necessarily the area in which it is making the displacement.

That is incorrect, and the third amendment sought to fix that. The intent of this amendment is to ensure that the benefits of an offsetting habitat bank remain local in comparison to the work, undertaking or activity. “Local” would be either as close as practicable to the area, or within the same province. The general idea is that the closer to the affected area it is, the better. A mining project in St. John's should not be offset by a habitat bank in northern Ontario or Vancouver Island, or vice versa.

This amendment maintains that it needs ministerial flexibility while protecting the local fish populations and providing certainty to industry about where credits can be used. Habitat banking benefits should remain as local as possible, as a guiding principle. If that is not practical, then the benefits should at least remain in the province where the work was carried out.

Late last night, the government set forth and gave notice of its amendments to the Senate amendments. Unfortunately, late last night the government responded by removing the new habitat banking provisions. The government said that it “respectfully disagrees with amendment 11 because the amendment seeks to legislate in respect of third-party, or market-based, fish habitat banking, which is beyond the policy intent of the Bill that is to provide only for proponent-led fish habitat banking.”

Is the government kidding? What a bunch of hogwash. The government put the habitat banking provisions into the bill. To say that the amendments to the habitat banking are beyond the policy intent is absolutely absurd, unless, of course, this bill is nothing more than just a cover and a piece and is not really intended to actually do anything but is just another thing for Liberals to stand up and say, “We did it”, getting all the support from the third party groups that supported them in 2015. I will say more on that later.

Government Orders

● (1630)

Let us go back and look at the absurdities of the bill from the beginning. On restoring lost protections, the minister stood and said that the former Conservative government gutted the Fisheries Act. Bill C-68 started with the Liberal campaign promise in 2015 to restore lost protections. After forming the government, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans asked the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans to investigate the so-called lost protections.

After an extensive study, an 86-page report to Parliament was issued. To my colleagues who are in the House, and the packed gallery, how many lost protections were found? There were none. Zero. Not one witness came before the committee and said that the 2012 amendments to the Fisheries Act by the former Conservative government resulted in lost protections. As a matter of fact, what we heard was that they gave some assurances or some consistency to the application process. We also had some proponents who said that it actually made things tougher, but at least they knew the steps in the process they had to go through.

It is shocking that these guys, time and time again, stand in the House and use the same old talking points. Canadians are not going to be fooled. I think I just saw a poll that ranked the Prime Minister and the Liberal government at 15% in terms of environmental protection. Our hon. colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands scored the highest, and I think our leader was next. Way down the list was the member for Papineau, our Prime Minister.

After that extensive study and an 86-page report, not one lost protection was found. The dissenting report we issued said the following:

Contrary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard's correspondence to the committee dated June 29, 2016 whereby the minister directed the committee to undertake a study investigating the 2012 changes to the Fisheries Act and any resulting lost protections,

I thought committees were supposed to be at arm's-length and masters of their own destination. How many times has a minister or parliamentary secretary stood in the House and said, "Madam Speaker, committees are on their own to do whatever they want"? Probably they even had their hands on their hearts. It is crazy. It just adds to the hypocrisy of those across the way.

The report continues:

[W]itnesses who appeared before the committee were unable to provide any scientific or legal proof of harm resulting from asserted lost protections under the Act as a result of the 2012 changes. This fact was noted on page 33 of the committee report, which states, "The preceding paragraphs in this section indicate the differing testimony heard with no scientific or legal evidence provided to show whether the 2012 changes broadened or reduced the circumstances under which section 35 applies."

In some cases, witnesses like the Mining Association of Canada expressed that the 2012 changes to the Act actually increased habitat protections. They said, "...the 2012 changes have in practice broadened the circumstances in which the section 35 prohibitions apply and increased the circumstances in which an authorization and offsets are required."

The CFA also added that, "...it is the CFA's position that a complete revert to reinstate all provisions of the Fisheries Act as they were would be unproductive [and] reestablish the same problems for farmers, and...provide little improvement [in conservation]."

● (1635)

I have just gone through the Senate amendments as they apply to habitat banking. I could go on at length about inshore fisheries, and I will do that later in my speech.

I will talk about Bill S-203, which is ending whales in captivity, which was rolled into this bill, and some of the concerns Conservatives have. Previously, when a southern resident killer whale was in jeopardy and in need of rescuing, there had to be an order in council from the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia. The Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia and the province do not have the mechanisms in place to respond quickly to that request. When every minute counts when trying to save the life of a resident killer whale or a cetacean, we need to have a tool in our tool box to act quickly. In that regard, Bill S-203 was flawed at that point. That was a serious concern the Conservatives had. The Senate amendments took that away, and that power now rests with the minister in this House, which I think is the right way of moving forward.

While there are still concerns about Bill S-203, we believe that the amendments from the Senate give us some assurances that some of the main concerns we had were addressed. However, in Bill S-203, there were some differences in the translation from French to English. In legal terms, one could argue that the intent may not be the same. That was brought up at committee, and the legal team and officials could not answer questions as to whether those discrepancies in the translation from French to English could have serious consequences down the road.

Bill S-238 is the shark finning bill. As I mentioned, a Conservative senator put forward Bill S-238. It is similar to the bill my hon. colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam put forward earlier in this session, which was voted down, but I am glad to see that Bill S-238 has been rolled into Bill C-68. Again, there are concerns as to how Bill S-238 could be prescribed down the road, but I believe in my hon. colleague's intent and in the spirit of the bill.

As was mentioned earlier, when the officials were before committee during the study of Bills-238 talking about the practice of shark finning and the importation of shark fins, shark fin soup is apparently still allowed to be imported. Shark fin soup can come in, because "soup is soup", which is a quote from one of the officials. They committed to get back to the committee as to whether that was true. I have yet to hear if they got back to the committee.

My hon. colleague talked about the intent of Bill C-68. It is important for Conservatives to state our concerns about the bill once again. They were mentioned previously, and I have expressed some of them. Bill C-68, from a policy perspective, is a piece of legislation that makes Canadians feel good.

Government Orders

●(1640)

It is interesting that after the Senate amendments beefed the bill up, the minister and the Liberal government watered it back down, just as senators were trying to beef things up and do their job. The Senate does great work. It sent the bill back to us with some good amendments, yet the minister and the government are scrapping a good portion of them.

As I said, Bill C-68 was payback for all the third party groups that supported our Liberal colleagues across the way. Well, they supported anyone but the Conservatives. This leads me to my next point, which is relevant, because it goes to the crux of Bill C-68.

Bill C-68 can be grouped with Bill C-69, the Liberals no pipeline bill, and Bill C-48, the oil tanker moratorium act. Recently, six premiers from across the country wrote the Prime Minister to say that the bills represent one of the largest threats to national unity we have seen, that the threat to our national economy is real and that the damage these bills would do to our economy, jobs and investments is profound.

Why do I bring this up? As I mentioned, Bill C-68 is payback for all the support the Liberals got in the 2015 election. What support am I referring to? In 2015, 114 third parties poured \$6 million into influencing the election outcome. Many of those parties were funded by the U.S.-based Tides Foundation. The new director of policy was a top executive there. The Prime Minister's former chief adviser, Gerald Butts, was previously the president of the World Wildlife Fund, another Tides-sponsored organization.

Another Tides-sponsored organization is Leadnow. As noted in an article, it is a "non-profit society that was created in 2010 with the goal of bringing to Canada a model of on-line, political campaigning and movement organizing that began in the U.S. behind President Barack Obama."

The article states:

During Canada's 2015 federal election, Leadnow ran a strategic voting initiative called Vote Together. Leadnow claims to have defeated 25 Conservative incumbents.

Leadnow targeted me, but it did not win. However, it was successful in 25 Conservative-held ridings.

The article continues:

From Leadnow's 2010 Business Plan, it is clear that as far back as 2010, Leadnow has been focused on defeating the Conservative government. Leadnow's "Investor Package" states that Leadnow intended to "offer tangible support to parties that adopt their policies, and use tools like strategic voting to 'swing elections' to reflect Canada's progressive majority."

Why am I bringing this up? What is the relevance? This goes back to 2008, when a group of radical American anti-fossil-fuel NGOs created a tar sands campaign. It was geared, as quoted in a column in the Financial Post, to landlocking "the Canadian oil sands by delaying or blocking the expansion or development of key pipelines" by "educating and organizing First Nations to challenge construction of pipelines across their traditional territories" and bringing "multiple actions in Canadian federal and provincial courts." These NGOs wanted to raise the negatives, including by recruiting celebrity spokespeople, such as Leonardo DiCaprio, to "lend their brand to opponents of tar sands and generat[e] a high negative media profile for tar sands oil."

The column states:

[T]he Rockefeller Foundation, the Hewlett Foundation, and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation... along with environmentalist charities, poured hundreds of millions of dollars into the U.S.-based Tides Foundation

Why did they do that? It was to do whatever they could to target our natural resources.

I say this because fish is a natural resource, and Bill C-68 is another bill, along with Bill C-69, the no pipelines bill, and Bill C-48, the tanker moratorium, that targets our resource sector.

●(1645)

I will bring members back to the earliest days of this sitting where the Prime Minister stood and said that Canada would become known more for our resourcefulness than our resources.

Make no bones about it; these groups have infiltrated our government at the highest levels. Gerald Butts, president and CEO of the World Wildlife Fund, was a chief adviser to the Prime Minister. He brought with him former campaigners. Marlo Reynolds, chief of staff to the environment minister, was a past executive director for the Tides-backed Pembina Institute. Zoë Caron, chief of staff to the Minister of Natural Resources, was a former WWF Canada official. Sarah Goodman, on the Prime Minister's staff, was a former vice-president of Tides and now holds potentially one of the most powerful positions as director of policy in the PMO. It is concerning at every step of the way.

I will bring members back to question period when the Minister of Democratic Institutions said that one side of the House likes to cheat and the others are doing everything to protect our democracy. We have seen time and again, going back to 2015, where we have all of these groups that were funded to take on our former prime minister Stephen Harper and the Conservatives to defeat them and they propped up this Prime Minister, then the member for Papineau, and he made all of these promises. What do we see? We see now that he is following through on those promises to the environmental groups, the NGOs.

I have had fisheries groups and first nations say to me that when they want to get in to see the minister, they have to go through environmental groups. I do not think there is a government that has had more lawsuits against it from first nations than any other than the current government. On marine protected areas, the government is doing what it calls consultation. I will get into the consultation on Bill C-68. The Liberals like to say it is consultation. They will stand in the House and they are disingenuous to Canadians who are listening in. We have the proof. I talked a little about how the foreign funding has influenced our highest offices of the government, and that is what we are seeing in our pieces of legislation. Bill C-68 is no different.

Government Orders

As part of the economic action plan in 2012, and in support of a responsible resource development plan, our former Conservative government put forward changes to the Fisheries Act. They were geared at strengthening the act and removing unnecessary bureaucratic red tape. They were geared at making that process manageable so that proponents knew the steps that had to be taken. It was not letting them off the hook. We heard testimony from the Mining Association of Canada that it actually increased areas to which its members could be found negligible and fined. Our changes supported a shift from managing impacts to all fish habitats to focusing the act's regulatory regime and managing threats to the sustainability and ongoing productivity of Canada's commercial, recreational and indigenous fisheries.

Now, instead of listening to experts, the people who actually use our waterways and fish our rivers, lakes and oceans, the government turned a deaf ear to practicality and pushed forward, through the use of time allocation, legislation that will affect lives and do little to enhance the deterioration of fisheries in Canada. I said that in a previous speech. At that time, I believe it was 23 out of 25 of our core fisheries that were at very serious levels. Why was that? The fisheries management plans were not done. We do not manage fisheries to grow more fish. We manage fisheries to extinction.

• (1650)

I would put our team up against that team any time. Our member of Parliament for North Okanagan—Shuswap, our member of Parliament for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa and our member of Parliament for Red Deer—Lacombe all had previous careers in this. We hunt. We fish. We live off the land. We are farmers. We are conservationists at heart. Bill C-68 actually made things harder with some of the changes that we did.

One of the Liberal members who was on the committee at the time, who himself is a farmer, said that if he had a flood on his property, the changes that the former Conservative government had done would actually make it easier for him to respond. If a community or a municipality had a road that was washed out, it actually allowed workers to go in, without skirting any of the rules or regulations, work within the prescribed timelines and schedule to actually get the work done and respond quickly.

• (1655)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I hate to interrupt the member when he is in the middle of his speech. I know he still has a lot to say, but this will just take a minute.

[*Translation*]

It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Saskatoon West, Housing; the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, Justice.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George.

[*English*]

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, I have to get back to where I was. I was on a roll too.

Instead of listening to experts, the Liberals thought they knew best. Bill C-68 proposed to restore the lost protections by returning

to the previous definition of harmful alteration, disruption and destruction of fish habitat, or HADD, as I mentioned in my earlier comments.

The act would also require the minister to take into account indigenous knowledge and expertise when provided, and all decisions would have to take into account the possible impacts on indigenous rights. The bill would allow for the establishment of an advisory panel and for members to be remunerated, and provides no guidance on or limitation to its use.

Bill C-68, under the part with respect to the prevention of the escape of fish, would prohibit the fishing of cetaceans with the intent to take them into captivity. This was captured under Bill S-203.

The Liberals believe that the bill will restore lost protections and incorporate modern safeguards. They think it will provide certainty for industry. They say it will provide strong and meaningful protection of fish and fish habitat. However, we know they are wrong.

When we introduced changes to the act in 2012, we did so because the former Fisheries Act was not working. The legislation was way past its best before date, a line, by the way, which the former fisheries minister used when he was describing the changes to it. The legislation was past its best before date and no one was happy with the way things were working. We acknowledged that so we made some changes.

Our common sense approach improved fisheries conservation, prioritized fish productivity, protected significant fisheries and reduced the regulatory burden on industry and communities. Again, it did not lessen any of the regulations. They were still there. They were still in place. I will go back to the Mining Association of Canada's comment that it actually increased some of the areas where under section 35 they could be found in contravention.

In 2012, the Conservative government undertook a rigorous review of and revisions to the Fisheries Act. This review was commenced for a number of reasons, and primarily that the broad scope of the definition of "fish habitat" included entire watersheds and extended the reach of the federal government into watersheds and land use planning, in which the Department of Fisheries and Oceans did not have expertise.

As a matter of fact, I believe a witness said that by the definition under the former Fisheries Act, a puddle in one's backyard could be deemed a fish habitat. Even a septic pipe that burst and led to a large pool of water in one's backyard could be deemed a fish habitat.

There was a lack of discretion for what was important fish habitat as it relates to fish productivity and what was less important. The House will not get any argument on this side that all fish are important. We must do whatever we can to ensure that we are growing fish for today and for the future.

Government Orders

We do incredible work on the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans by putting our partisan stripes aside. All members of that committee are able to work together to try to find common ground.

• (1700)

I know that might be foreign to some people in this House. I know that some members who are not on that committee from the government side are laughing and heckling at me right now. However, I can say with all honesty that our colleagues from all sides of the House are committed to finding whatever solution we can, whether it is the northern cod study, the Atlantic salmon study, the aquatic invasive study that we just completed, or our steelhead study that we have done.

We did a study on abandoned and derelict vessels that was proposed by one of our NDP colleagues. In the last sitting, it was proposed by a Conservative colleague for us to review and revise, to look at how Canada deals with its derelict vessels. In the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, that authority was not happening. Many times, communities, and in some instances individual Canadians, were left to try to deal with rusting and derelict vessels that were left in their waterways.

We do great work, and we all are focused on one thing: the protection of our coastal communities. It is not just our coastal communities, but those families who depend on our fisheries for their livelihoods and for sustenance. We are committed to trying to find a way, working through our committee, to having a full understanding of how certain pieces of legislation come through and how the government continues with its mandate.

All members, if they were polled, would say it is absolutely shameful when we have bureaucrats and officials come before us and they promise to be better. At one of my very first meetings, I walked into the committee like a bull in a china shop. It had a bit of a reputation as one of those committees that spun its wheels and never got anything done. That is what I heard, but little did I know. I met my colleague from Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa and learned of the great work he had done previously and the history that he has. I met some of my Liberal colleagues and heard from them first-hand about what goes on in their communities, and some of the concerns coming from the Rock or the east coast and from Vancouver.

I take offence on this, and some of my colleagues from the Rock know where I am going with this one. When the surf clam issue took place, the seven MPs from the Rock for the most part were silent. I am looking at my friend across the way and I know he was not. However, for the most part, the members from the Rock were silent during the whole surf clam issue. The issue was that the former fisheries minister awarded a lucrative surf clam quota to a sitting Liberal MP's brother, a former Liberal colleague. As well, we found out down the way, it was a company that was being led by the former minister's wife's first cousin. We managed to get a stop to that.

I bring that up to point out that we do great work in these committees. They are supposed to be at arm's length and masters of their own destiny in terms of the work that they do. However, on Bill C-68 on the Fisheries Act, we saw a letter that came from the minister, not asking but ordering the committee to immediately undertake a study on the changes to the Fisheries Act.

Going back to my speech, as I mentioned, there was a lack of discretion in terms of important fish habitat as it relates to fish productivity and what is less important. I got off track, but I want to reiterate that all fish are important. The inconsistencies led to difficulties in assessing an appropriate level of regulatory effort that was proportional to actual importance.

• (1705)

I met with front-line officers, who said that previously the act was harder to enforce. It was challenging. They needed to have some consistency. The Conservative changes made it, not easier for the proponent to get away with what they were doing, but it did make it easier because it was black and white as to what was wrong and what was right. It made it easier for the front-line officers to enforce the Fisheries Act.

Further, the lack of knowledge regarding fish populations allowed for all water bodies to be considered as fish habitat until proven otherwise, and as I mentioned, even puddles. One of the witnesses said that technically, under the former definition, a puddle could have been considered a fish habitat.

Before we introduced changes, all fish and consequently all fish habitat, regardless of economic or social value, received protection under the Fisheries Act. This created a system that was impossible to manage and impediments for most minor work. Farmers looking to improve their land or deal with flooding or other issues, or municipalities looking to install a drain, had to go through a bureaucratic process that made doing one's taxes look easy.

To top it off, there were the inconsistencies between departments. Depending on which DFO office someone went to, it could make someone want to give up on the whole process entirely.

With the restoration of "harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat", HADD provisions, the government is putting it back in place. It means that Canadians will once again need to deal with a set of unenforceable guidelines that will hinder the development and truly do nothing to increase fish stocks or protect valuable habitat.

We heard numerous members, over the course of our previous discussions on Bill C-68, as well as this one, talk about the restoration of lost protections. Again, they used terms such as "gutted". To me, that is fairly offensive. I think all members of Parliament in this House sign up to do the best that we can, given the portfolios and the files we have. Some of the language that we get from across the way is quite offensive.

It is interesting. Liberals are always the ones who stand up and say that Conservatives are the most divisive bunch. They are fearmongering and they are pitting Canadians against Canadians. Do not even get me started on Liberals using reconciliation on things such as the surf clam project. Liberals stood in the House and said that it was all under the guise of reconciliation, when we knew it pitted first nation against first nation and non-first nation against first nation.

Government Orders

I will go back to this issue as well. The government was trying to deal with the southern mountain caribou issue that we have in British Columbia, and some of the consultations, or lack of consultation, that the Liberals have done. They basically mandated the provincial government to immediately do something, or the Liberal government was going to do a section 80, I believe it is, under the Species at Risk Act. That essentially sent fear throughout our whole province. I urge Canadians, if they get a chance, to Google the southern mountain caribou issue in the province of British Columbia. If Canadians want to see a bungled PR mess, that is it right there. The Liberals have now walked back on it.

However, this all goes back to what we were saying, that the Liberals were not listening to local stakeholders who are on the ground. Liberals believe that they know best and so this is what they are going to do. Again, I will go back to this. If we looked at the letters and requests to the minister to take action, they all came from groups that receive money from foreign-funded groups.

There is no one here who would want to see a species die off. I stood and very clearly stated my message during this whole process that the promise and trust have been broken. At one point, our federal representatives did not want to chime in, although they were the ones who were directing it. They wanted the provincial government to be front and centre, taking all the heat at all the town hall meetings.

● (1710)

Trust has been broken by the Liberal government time and time again. It uses terms like “reconciliation”. Just last week, a member of a first nation called me and said that “reconciliation” is not a buzzword. Unfortunately, the government and the Prime Minister have used it time and time again, and it is shameful. They do things like the surf clam and the southern mountain caribou, and do it under guise of reconciliation. If they want to do something under the guise of reconciliation, how about ending all of the boil water advisories or the suicide epidemic in first nations communities from coast to coast?

Last week, the missing and murdered indigenous women's commission came out with some recommendations. The government knew that this report was coming, but did it budget anything to act on any of the findings? There was nothing.

When we talk about Bill C-68, we are talking about trust. Time and again, the government has broken the trust of Canadians. It promised to have only small deficits and that it would balance the budget by 2019. We are in 2019. Liberals always like to blame those who came before them. It is quite shameful. They have been in government now for four years. It is about time that they take some leadership and ownership of the problems they have created themselves.

We have heard a number of members opposite talk about the restoration of lost protections. We know from the recounting of testimony from witness after witness that there were no lost protections from the previous government's changes.

The former minister of fisheries and oceans said, “Canada is uniquely blessed with an abundance of freshwater and marine coastal areas that are both ecologically significant and linked to the

economic prosperity of Canadians.” I could not agree more on this. Canada has the longest coastline in the world. What I do not agree with is the assertion that protections were lost.

The Liberal changes to the Fisheries Act would lengthen the regulatory process, provide unclear and weaker rules to establish and manage ecologically significant areas, and simply put, return us to a destabilization that will prove to be cumbersome and unmanageable. The former minister noted that he wanted to re-establish public confidence, and yet the amendments he proposed to the bill would do nothing. The bill we got back from the Senate had some good amendments that strengthened the bill to a certain extent, and yet the Liberals gutted them again.

Bill C-68 would make it harder for proponents wishing to develop property and will weaken transparency through the creation of more bureaucratic red tape. Farmers looking to improve their land, and municipalities looking to install drains, are going to be faced with a lengthy bureaucratic process that is going to make it harder to respond to critical incidents. There have been flooding incidents in our communities. In 2017, there were massive wildfires, as everyone knows, and it would make it harder and harder for farmers to recover from natural disasters.

The minister hoped his bill would help to protect middle-class jobs in coastal communities. He actually said that. However, just after introducing the bill, the surf clam process took place. I have spent a lot of time in Grand Bank and several coastal communities meeting with fishing organizations and indigenous communities from all across our country, and they are fed up. They are fed up with the government's virtue-signalling and while doing whatever it can to make it harder for them to prosper.

● (1715)

A chief of a first nation called me last week. He told me, “I just want the government to get out of the way so that I can lead my community to prosperity. I want the government to get out of the way. When I need their help, I want them to be able to act and act quickly, but I need them to get out of the way, because if there are poverty or social issues in my community, that is on me.” He said, “I am a forward-leaning leader within my community and I want to lead my community to prosperity.”

Unfortunately, the government's pandering to third party groups is making it harder. He said, “I for one, and our community for one, are tired of being the poster child for some of these third party groups.” Some of them I named earlier in this speech.

That brings me back to Edgar, a good friend I met during the surf clam project. I remember his words. He said that the minister's decision to arbitrarily take that surf clam quota away shook his life, shook his foundation, shook his community, the Grand Bank community. It is a community that has had a fishing history for over 400 years. I remember the mayor telling me that the scars of the industry run right straight through the middle of this community.

Government Orders

That is an example of how the government has lost the trust of Canadians. I bring this up because Bill C-68 is another example, and Canadians are weary. They are distrustful that in the eleventh hour of the final session for this government, it is bringing this measure forward, just as we saw with other pieces of legislation.

We are sitting to midnight now. Why are we sitting to midnight? The government House leader says we are sitting to midnight now. Canadians expect us to work. I do not have a problem sitting to midnight, but why are we sitting to midnight? It is because of the Liberals' failure to make progress with legislation. There has been no real priority.

Let us speak about priorities. Two weeks ago we heard from the government's independent leader in the Senate as to why softwood was not negotiated in the new NAFTA, but was there a priority? Today a Liberal member from the Lower Mainland in Vancouver stood up and touted his government's great record on job creation and low unemployment numbers in our province, all while layoff notices and job losses are mounting. That is shameful.

Just last night Canfor, the largest employer in my province and Canada's largest forestry producer, announced sweeping job curtailments throughout the province of British Columbia. Hundreds if not thousands of Canadians are out of work, and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard is clapping. That is shameful. I urge the parliamentary secretary to come to my riding. A tone-deaf, muted response was all I got last week to my comments about softwood not being a priority.

• (1720)

There was another response from the Liberals last week in response to my comments about softwood not being a priority. It was that Canadians should be reassured because the job numbers are up and the Liberals stand with the forestry workers. When are they standing with them? Are they standing with them when they are looking for work? Are they standing with them when they are worried about how they are going to make ends meet because they lost their livelihoods? Are they standing with them when they have to go to the bank because the bank is foreclosing on their house?

That is shameful. That goes to—

Mr. Sean Casey: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I realize the Chair offers a fair degree of latitude with respect to relevance and repetition, but perhaps you could bring the member back to the Senate amendments to the Fisheries Act. I do not see the link between forestry layoffs and the Senate amendments to the Fisheries Act, but I expect you will have him explain that to us.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I appreciate the point of order.

I want to remind all members who speak in the House that their speeches and debates must relate to the issue that is before the House. I trust the hon. member will do some turns to some degree to ensure that he is relevant.

The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's intervention.

That brings me back to a word that you used in your intervention, Madam Speaker, and that is “trust”. That is what has brought us all down this path. When Bill C-68 went to the Senate, we had trust that the Senate was going to do its job. Bill C-68 came back, and we had trust that the government was going to take a reasoned look at it, but it has gutted the amendments from the Senate.

I was going down a path with this in terms of trust. Canadians have lost trust and are weary of hearing the Liberals stand there and say they have our best interests at heart. It truly is relevant to Bill C-68 and to the Senate amendments, because members of the Senate heard from Canadians that they represent in their respective areas. They came at it, as I mentioned, in a collaborative spirit, as we do at the fisheries committee, and tried to enhance the bill.

I will offer this explanation as to why we are going down this path. When the minister stood and gave his presentation and intervention here, colleagues will remember that he talked at length about Bill C-68 and the Senate amendments and why the government felt it was necessary to go down the path that led to Bill C-68. Therefore, I believe I have the ability to talk about Bill C-68 and the background to it, and part of that background is Canadians' trust in the government, or their lack of it.

The hon. colleague can stand on a point of order as much as he likes. It is his privilege to do that, but it is also my privilege to be able to stand in this House and represent the electors of Cariboo—Prince George.

In time allocation, time and again the government chooses to ignore that there are 338 members of Parliament in this House, and that all members are here to represent the electors who elected them to this House. This House does not belong to the Prime Minister. It does not belong to you, Madam Speaker, and it does not belong to me. It belongs to the electors and those who elected us. It is our job to be here and bring our voices here.

When I am talking about priority and trust, I am trying to bring forth the voices of indigenous groups who have not been consulted on Bill C-68. I am bringing forth the voices of coastal communities who have not been consulted or who feel that they have not been heard in terms of Bill C-68. I am bringing forth the voices of my electors in Cariboo—Prince George, who feel that the government is not listening to them.

I will go back to Bill C-68 again and talk about protecting the livelihood of fishers in coastal communities, which is what the minister said was his intent in tabling this bill. If the minister was truly interested in protecting the livelihood of fishers in coastal communities, then probably both the former minister who made the statement and the current minister should have travelled to Grand Bank. They should have come to the Lax Kw'alaams first nation, which has major issues in terms of Bill C-48 and Bill C-69. They should talk to fisheries organizations, which have some serious concerns. They should talk to the farmers and municipalities that all have concerns with Bill C-68.

Private Members' Business

The minister received a letter from the Fisheries Council of Canada with respect to Bill C-68, and I should make it clear that it was the former fisheries minister who first tabled Bill C-68. He received a letter from the Fisheries Council of Canada that outlined some of their grave concerns over the way he had managed that file to that point.

• (1725)

I will provide a bit of background. The Fisheries Council was established in 1915. It has been the national voice for Canada's commercial fisheries for decades. Its members include small, medium and large companies along with indigenous groups that harvest fish in Canada's three oceans and inland waters. Member companies are also processors. They process the majority of Canada's fish and seafood products. The members take pride in being key employers in their communities. They are also stewards of the resource and work diligently to protect the waters, because sustainability of the fisheries is in the best interest of all involved, and they know that without the proper care and conservation, the resource will disappear.

Members of the Fisheries Council of Canada provide jobs for people like my friend, Edgar, whom I met in Grand Bank, where the minister's corrupt surf clam decision shook their foundation and people's livelihoods. Members of the Fisheries Council create an economic base that helps sustain the whole economy of these small towns and villages, these coastal communities, many of which have no other source of economic income. What the minister's actions did in taking away the lucrative surf clam quota, Bill C-68 at that point, was shake those communities to the core.

In its letter to the minister, the Fisheries Council wrote that recent actions and announcements from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans had undermined the fishing sector and therefore undermined the economic growth of Canada's coasts. It said, "Taking away the long-standing licences and quotas does not respect past investments and has put a chill on the future investments by Canadian fish processors. Many coastal communities and fish harvesters rely on their local fish processor to purchase their goods in order to bring their products to market. Without continued investment, the industry will stall."

This is astounding. The Fisheries Council has worked with governments of all colours and stripes and it had to write this letter to the former minister. The fact that it had to do this speaks volumes. In fact, what we heard from people all across Canada and in Grand Bank is that the current government has done nothing to ensure a stable, reliable, sustainable fishery.

It would seem to me, after witnessing what the government has done in regard to the Arctic surf clam, Bill C-68, Bill C-69 and Bill C-48, that unless one holds a Liberal Party membership or was once a Liberal member of Parliament or has made successful financial contributions to the Liberal cause, one is plain out of luck.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to continuing. I know that all my colleagues look forward to hearing the rest of my remarks.

• (1730)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George will have the floor when the House next gets back to debate on the question that is before the House.

It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

VETERANS HOMELESSNESS

Mr. Neil Ellis (Bay of Quinte, Lib.), seconded by the member for Saskatoon West, moved:

That, in the opinion of the House: (a) the government should set a goal to prevent and end veteran homelessness in Canada by 2025; (b) a plan to achieve this aim should be developed by the government and be presented to the House by June 2020, led by the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and supported by the Minister of Veterans Affairs; and (c) this plan should include consideration of whether a National Veterans Housing Benefit similar to the highly successful U.S. Housing and Urban Development – Veterans Administration Supportive Housing (HUD VASH) Program would fit the Canadian context, complementing the National Housing Strategy.

He said: Mr. Speaker, as chair of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, I am honoured to have the opportunity to rise in the House today on behalf of Canadian veterans across the country and within my riding of Bay of Quinte to request my hon. colleagues' consideration of my private member's motion, Motion No. 225.

Personally, it has been an incredible experience to work alongside my hon. colleagues on the veterans affairs committee to review the issues of veterans homelessness in Canada. Throughout the committee's study on this issue, I have been constantly impressed by the solid resolve of all members to work together to fix this issue.

In preparing our May 2019 report, I believe we all learned a great deal about the causes of homelessness and the range of solutions already put into action by key national veterans advocacy organizations. During committee, we had the chance to learn from representatives of the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, VETS Canada, the Old Brewery Mission and the Royal Canadian Legion, among others, all of which retain a clear understanding of which types of veterans are most at risk.

All 22 committee witnesses have made this issue visible. They have all collected and evaluated statistics, as well as on-the-ground narratives from our veterans. They have also brought best practices for solution-building into focus by sharing clear recommendations stemming from the successes of the various trial programs or initiatives their organizations have undertaken across the country.

In terms of general statistics, we were confronted with the reality that approximately 3,000 to 5,000 veterans are currently affected by homelessness. My riding has one of the highest populations of veterans across the country, with an estimated 3,067 veterans in total residing in the Bay of Quinte. That is nearly the same amount as the lowest threshold estimate for veterans who are homeless.

Private Members' Business

The information was made available by the homeless individuals and families information system. Each committee witness has been invaluable in clarifying the scope of the issue, bringing to light the frequency of shelter use, the typical characteristics representative of veterans identified as homeless or with a lack of stable housing and the recurring nature of this issue.

We were also presented with evidence that echoed the study findings forward in the *Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health* or the *Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health*, all of which indicate a direct correlation between difficulty transitioning into post-service life or adapting to civilian society, and instability of housing.

We saw that experiences of homelessness and lack of stable housing situations typically occur about 10 years after active service, that a variety of personal situations or triggers can place veterans more at risk for housing instability and that female or indigenous veterans represent much higher instances of shelter use than other veterans. The need to pursue a housing-first approach which is adaptive and can offer personalized supports, peer guidance, as well as direct access to necessary resources has been reaffirmed by nearly all the committee witnesses as the most effective type of solution. I firmly believe this recommendation must be addressed by the Government of Canada as soon as possible.

The observations shared with the committee on the reality of veterans' experiences of homelessness or lack of stable housing stood out to all of us as something that we can fix together. Motion No. 225 recognizes that the federal government has now reached a turning point. We have the data we need and it is time to act on it. The work already done by all of our key committee witnesses and the willingness of veterans to keep lines of communication open with us is what makes proceeding with Motion No. 225 possible. With all the information at our disposal now, we must get passed triage and head toward a long-term treatment for this issue.

As a quick overview, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's veterans administration supportive housing program is a collaborative program offered by HUD and Veterans Affairs. This program combines housing vouchers with VA support services to help homeless veterans and their families find and retain permanent housing. Using the capacity of public housing authorities, the program provides rental assistance vouchers for privately owned housing to veterans who are eligible for VA health care services and who are experiencing homelessness. VA case managers can direct these veterans to support services that address their unique health needs, treatments and recovery processes. As a result, veterans are best positioned to maintain housing and support within their community.

The American program focuses on veterans who have experienced long-term or recurring episodes of homelessness. If we adopt Motion No. 225, we can build a similar program that further reinforces VAC's work to simplify and deliver the highest calibre of services and programs to our veterans and their families. VAC continues to define "well-being" as a multi-layered and personal experience and recognizes seven domains of well-being, which are employment or meaningful purpose; financial security; health; life skills and preparedness; social integration; cultural and social environment; and housing and physical environment.

At the end of the day, VAC can offer the very best training, education benefits, employment tools or resources possible, but without a home, how can we expect our veterans and their families to access those services or truly enjoy post-service life altogether? Motion No. 225 would help us make sure that the best foundation for cultivating personal well-being is firmly in place for our veterans.

There are already some incredible housing initiatives in place and new projects under way across the country which address as many of these domains as possible. In particular, the strategies used by each of the organizations operating sites like Mainstay Housing in Toronto, Cockrell House in B.C. and soon Veterans' House here in Ottawa remind us of the importance of bringing peer-to-peer support for veterans experiencing homelessness to the forefront of our solutions.

● (1735)

In my own constituency office, having hired a veteran to address VAC casework, I have seen this principle in action first-hand. The positive impact that he has had on all our veterans clientele has been significant. Skip Simpson's capacity to guide veterans and their families on a full range of department services, local supports offered by advocate agencies or organizations has been instrumental in assisting veterans all across the Bay of Quinte.

Veterans who reach out to my constituency office are immediately relayed to Skip. Where necessary, he can assist with initiating or assessing status updates on Veterans Affairs Canada cases. Working alongside VAC caseworkers, Skip provides guidance and acts as a liaison throughout this process.

What I have learned from reviewing the feedback of Skip's work is that no matter how big or small the issue is, veterans are always pleased to speak with a peer who understands the nuances of their experiences. Getting veterans and their families their own walls, windows and doors is one thing; providing the satisfaction of an understanding peer community is also something that we should consider as part of this process.

There are numerous other examples of initiatives that I am not citing here which have made sure that veterans experiencing homelessness or lack of stable housing receive this type of model of service that draws from a peer-to-peer and personal support network approach.

The success of these initiatives shows us that focusing on the stability of housing is just as important as cultivating a strong sense of community to accompany it. Again, drawing from the American program's design, we know that the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, VETS Canada, the Old Brewery Mission and the Royal Canadian Legion already have a clear understanding of which types of veterans are most at risk of experiencing housing instability or homelessness.

Private Members' Business

Every year, approximately 5,550 CAF members are released from duty. Of this number, approximately 1,500 are medically released from duty. If veterans know they can connect with someone who understands their situation and can receive direction to appropriate resources and contacts from a trusted member of their community, they will feel more secure in reaching out, especially when there are sensitive personal circumstances involved.

Given that most of these organizations are led by or employ veterans, these organizations do understand how to build and maintain trust with our most vulnerable veterans across delivery of support services. These organizations have already dedicated a lot of time and effort to make sure that the full reality of a veteran's experience is taken into account.

These organizations already understand the roles, norms and language of our service community, and their staff work incredibly hard to ensure a consistent level of support when our veterans come in with questions or concerns.

If directly paired with VAC's case management services through a housing benefit delivered under the national housing strategy, a direct partnership with these organizations will accelerate the Government of Canada's ability to resolve and eliminate homelessness among Canadian veterans in the future.

Here, I would like to point out that this motion is not about duplicating or bypassing the department's caseworkers, but about providing the most personalized housing supports possible to a veteran. When this is in place, and with the department's assistance, our veterans will be better equipped to focus on accessing VAC supports or services for themselves and their family.

I firmly believe that these organizations' expertise in forming bonds of trust with our veterans is something that we need to reinforce and draw from as we move towards building a Canadian program similar to the U.S. veterans housing program. Harnessing this capacity will help us provide the most efficient and customized guidance to veterans, especially those most at risk of experiencing challenges to post-service transitions, and proceed directly to offer the casework that best fits their situation once the most essential foundation, a home, is in place.

If the House adopts this motion and moves towards development of a national veterans housing benefit, the Government of Canada would be better able to provide veterans and their families an enduring foundation by which they can access the full range of department services or local supports offered by advocate agencies and organizations. By harnessing the capacity and expertise of our on-the-ground partner organizations that serve veterans most at risk of, or are currently experiencing homelessness, we will also be better equipped to deliver a customized review of all the issues present within the given scenario, and reinforce continuity of contact between veterans and their VAC caseworkers, peers and their personal support networks.

I firmly believe that the Government of Canada has everything to gain by setting a clear timeline for meeting the goal of Motion No. 225. There are no reasons why eliminating homelessness among our Canadian veterans cannot be achieved. We can and we must do more. Therefore, I kindly request that all hon. members of the House

support Motion No. 225 and push us even closer to that goal for 2025.

At this time I would like to move an amendment to my motion. I move that, in the opinion of the House, the government should (a) set a goal to prevent and end veteran homelessness in Canada by 2025; (b) a plan to achieve this aim should be developed by the government and be presented to the House by June 2020, co-led by the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and the Minister of Veterans Affairs; and (c) this plan should include consideration of whether a national veterans housing benefit similar to the highly successful U.S. Housing and Urban Development veterans administration supportive housing, HUD-VASH, program would fit the Canadian context, complementing the national housing strategy.

● (1740)

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the hon. member for Bay of Quinte that he is unable to move an amendment to his own motion. He had the floor to speak to the motion that he proposed to the House. Accordingly, perhaps if another member is willing to do so, that could be taken up at a later time in the debate.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Saskatoon West.

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to let my hon. colleague know how pleased I am to see this come to the floor and to hear him speak of the need for leadership from Parliament and the government.

The member may remember that I tried to pass a similar motion to get the government to make a bigger plan to end homelessness and to set goals and targets. Therefore, the member knows I am onside.

Depending on what happens in the House, I would like to hear his commitment to continue to fight to ensure, regardless of what happens with the motion today, that he will commit to move his government. He has introduced a very solid plan. I do not see any reason why the government cannot move forward to end veterans' homelessness in Canada.

Mr. Neil Ellis: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for all the support she has given on the motion.

Today, I met with both ministers. If the motion does not proceed tonight, hopefully we can get this into policy.

Today, a homeless veteran showed up at my office. In the Bay of Quinte region, at least seven to nine veterans are homeless and have been helped through outside organizations like the legion.

If Motion No. 225 had been in place, we could have had this four to five years down the road. We could have given that veteran who showed up at my office instant help. My caseworker is looking now for a home and support for this gentleman. It is a typical vet who shows up and is in distress.

Private Members' Business

• (1745)

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am fully in support of the motion. There are a few things I am not positive about, because it is incorporating it in the national housing strategy, which is okay, but not fantastic.

For four years, the Liberals have been in power. They have talk about the things they have done for veterans. They have talked about the national housing strategy. Why has nothing been done in the last four years?

Mr. Neil Ellis: Mr. Speaker, our committee did a homeless report, which was tabled in Parliament in May, and we did not get an answer to it. This is my motion, Motion No. 225. It speaks to homelessness. My private member's motion time was allotted today. This is why I have not been able to work this motion in quicker. I wish it had been scheduled earlier and then we would have had a chance for second reading. However, I hope to follow up on this. Hopefully this is something we can all solve together.

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Bay of Quinte for his hard work on veterans issues. He has chaired the veterans committee now for almost four years and has done an exceptional job. I want to sincerely thank him for that.

Our government has brought forward the first-ever national housing program. In that program vulnerable Canadians and veterans are a priority. That is extremely important. The member has mentioned the legion and Veterans Canada's great work to identify veterans who are homeless.

Would my colleague share some of the work that has been done in his riding on homelessness, but also about gender. Are we noticing a difference in the gender of homelessness among veterans?

Mr. Neil Ellis: Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about gender. What the statistics are showing, which are not totally accurate, are that vets tend to be under the age of 30, and 50% of them tend to be women showing up in shelters. In the forces, we might have 10% to 15% women, so this rate is higher. We do not know why. Again, part of the motion is to do the research to figure out why some of these things are happening.

My riding is a typical urban rural riding and nine vets have presented. When we look at statistics per 1,000, the U.S. statistics per 1,000 are about 2.1 veterans and in Canada we are at 3.2. Therefore, we are over double the number of homeless veterans. The veterans in the U.S. population is about 30% higher, but our ratios per 1,000 are higher.

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for this motion, which is great. We need to help our homeless veterans.

Some homeless veterans suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. They live in the woods out behind my community. I wonder if the member could tell me what kinds of plans are in place to work with people who have PTSD and who struggle to integrate back into society, but are homeless and living in the woods.

Mr. Neil Ellis: Mr. Speaker, the member hit the problem right on. A lot of veterans do not want to present and are living in the woods or under bridges. Therefore, part of this is to try to locate them. Once

a year or so, we have agencies with boots on the ground that go out and find veterans. Part of this initiative would be to find them and register them.

There would be a registry in each community so we could look at finding them housing. We would look at the program and if it were a supplement, like the U.S. supplement, they would be connected with a VAC caseworker. That VAC caseworker would first find them a home. It is all about getting them into housing and then dealing with their mental illness, whether it is related to alcoholism or trouble integrating into society. That is part of what would be covered under Motion No. 225.

• (1750)

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as this session comes to a close, I cannot think of a better way to end my first term as the member of Parliament for Yorkton—Melville than to rise and speak to our veterans community on issues that so deeply impact veterans' quality of life following service and their sense of being valued and appreciated by Canadians.

I am humbled and grateful that I have had the privilege of serving as deputy shadow minister of Veterans Affairs and also on the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs for these four years.

In that time, individual veterans and veterans organizations have reached out to me through committee, social media groups, emails and face-to-face meetings at round tables and town halls as I travelled across Canada and then over to France to celebrate Canada's Hundred Days. The time I spent with the veterans who travelled with us was very precious. They have also reached out to me by getting together informally at restaurants and in homes.

What I have appreciated more than anything is how patient veterans have been with me while reminiscing, documenting experiences and providing their perspectives on how things could be done so much better than they are.

I am sure members can appreciate that veterans do not tend to sugar-coat the issues. They are pretty direct. They speak very frankly and passionately. I am not surprised or, quite honestly, offended by the intensity they sometimes express. After all, they have been trained to be intense, to fight against injustice and to fight for us.

Long overdue is the government's recognition of duty of care implied in the promise that whatever happens when enlisting, the government will take care of veterans and their families. The recommendations on transition, mental health, homelessness, medicinal cannabis, abuse of mefloquine as an anti-malarial drug and financial support for the treatment of physical and mental repercussions of war, just to name a few, are reasonable and achievable.

Private Members' Business

Motion No. 255 provides the opportunity for the Government of Canada to respond to veterans' recommendations on the need and the possibility to end veterans homelessness in Canada: first, by setting a clear target for eliminating homelessness among Canadian veterans; second, by maximizing Veterans Affairs Canada's capacity to deliver key benefits; and, third, by co-partnering with national veterans organizations to employ their existing capacity, peer-to-peer networks and bonds of trust established with veterans in order to accelerate the delivery of this program nationally.

Truly, these organizations have such a capacity already. They have good peer-to-peer relationships and they have bonds of trust that come through the relationships they have among themselves with veterans. Therefore, their role in this is very significant. It is undeniable that the level of bureaucracy and the long-standing culture of mistrust and denial within VAC needs to be purged.

There is no question that this uneven playing field has added much frustration to an already challenging life change for our veterans. Quite often, mental illness, family dysfunction, physical pain and suffering, suicides and homelessness have been increased as a result of their frustrations in trying to work with VAC.

To ensure opportunities for the government to respond, I have heard the following from veterans' advocates. They feel that the role of VAC should be mandated in three ways.

First is to provide sufficient funding for clearly delineated, simple, efficiently administered programs of care for injury and lifetime benefits, with the benefit of the doubt going to the veteran and his or her family.

Second is that beginning with enlistment and throughout their service, VAC must facilitate future veterans and their families in choosing and implementing their own path for life beyond service, in other words, for VAC to be involved early in the beginning stages of the veterans' service and be there to facilitate and encourage them to realize that they can make decisions to determine in advance their own paths once their service ends and that they can have a lot of understanding before they face that very difficult time when they no longer serve.

● (1755)

Finally, VAC should identify and support veteran and community organizations that veterans and their families can access for delivery of services. In polite terms, affirm, enable and empower those organizations to do what they do best, and the things they do best that VAC would be better giving them the responsibility for.

I was honoured to represent my Conservative caucus at the press conference announcing Motion No. 225 on veterans homelessness in Canada. There are very good elements in this motion put forward by this government. However, as the member mentioned, because of the lateness of its introduction, we are now days away from this session ending. Therefore, it is only a first step. It is a motion that will depend on the next government to implement.

I was very pleased to also recognize at that press conference the role of Tim Richter with the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, Dave Gordon and Ray McLinnis with the Royal Canadian Legion, Matthew Pearce with the Old Brewery Mission, and Jim and Debbie Lowther with VETS Canada, for their involvement in the

making of that announcement. Truly, they were very pleased to see a focus on homelessness going forward from our government.

Along with other veteran and community organizations, they are the heart, hands and feet that advocate for and work directly with veterans and their families. They successfully implement the quality of care that our veterans deserve and need. They are all unique in their approach and provide a variety of options for services that tackle many issues, including veterans homelessness.

For example, VETS Canada has opened up a care centre five blocks from where I live. In the course of its first year, it has serviced 365 different veterans with emergency needs, and it has done it without any direct funding from VAC.

In testimony at our committee on the study of veterans homelessness, they all had excellent contributions. I would encourage all veterans and people who are viewing today to take a look at the study from the veterans affairs committee on homelessness and listen to what they had to say.

I can focus on only one veteran today, and so I am going to talk about Tim Richter. He is the president and CEO of the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness. I would like to share some of his recommendations. He has solid experience in preventing and ending homelessness, including experience in developing housing programs for homeless vets. He also served for just over six years in the Canadian Forces and is a Veterans Affairs client. Clearly, he is capable and well positioned for this. Veterans homelessness is a concern that is very close to his heart, and he is rightly pleased to see us working together on an initiative. He said, "The first [thing] is that veterans homelessness in Canada is readily solvable. The number of homeless veterans in Canada is relatively small. It's unknown, but it's relatively small. We know what to do and we know how to do it."

He went on to say, "We have a strong veterans network. We have solid expertise in communities like Homes for Heroes. We have proven models to follow, and I think we have strong public support."

I can affirm that they certainly do. He continued with, "What's missing is federal leadership and decisive action. We need a federal government prepared to make a clear and unequivocal commitment to ending veterans homelessness and to invest the fairly modest additional resources needed to get the job done."

Private Members' Business

Ending veterans homelessness is possible if government does its part, and, in doing its part, realizes that there are others, not politicians, not public service employees, but others who have served or are dialed in to assist veterans on the ground where and how they need it most. There are people available to be the feet, the hands and the hearts of this particular focus to end homelessness.

To quote Tim one more time, "We know what to do and we know how to do it."

Following October 21, 2019, the incoming government will do its part to enable and work with stakeholder communities and organizations to ensure that every veteran has a home.

● (1800)

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the fact that I am able to stand here today with my democratically elected colleagues from all parties and freely debate this motion is a testament to the service and bravery of our veterans and active military personnel. I thank them for all they have done, and will do, for our country.

New Democrats believe that the service and sacrifice of veterans and their families is something that must be remembered and honoured. We believe that it has earned them a safe, affordable place to call home, but sadly, for too many veterans that is not the case.

Only two things are required to end homelessness among veterans: a government that makes it a goal and that has a plan to achieve it. Sadly, up until this point, the government has had neither. Therefore, I want to thank the hon. member for Bay of Quinte for tabling this motion and for making the ending of homelessness among veterans a priority. I would like him to know that it has my support.

Once upon a time, a veteran without a home was absolutely unthinkable. Before it became the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the CMHC was founded as the Canadian Wartime Housing corporation. At that time, Canadians and our federal government believed that in return for their service and sacrifice, veterans and their families deserved a safe, affordable place to call home, so we built them one.

Today, our successive federal governments have gotten out of the business of building homes. Frankly, some would say that our government has nearly gotten out of the business of serving veterans as well. To no one's surprise, when the federal government stopped building homes and supporting veterans, we saw a sharp rise in homelessness among veterans. The good news is that we can eliminate homelessness among veterans and all Canadians.

I have no doubt that this motion was inspired by the testimony and proposals put forward by witnesses at the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, which has studied this very issue over the last six months. On behalf of the NDP, I would like to take a moment to thank the 22 individuals and groups who shared their experiences with that committee and for their work on behalf of veterans and their families.

I would like to read a quote from testimony at that committee, which I think sums up the challenges of eliminating homelessness among veterans quite well.

At one of those committee meetings, Debbie Lowther, chair and co-founder of VETS Canada, said the following:

We know that there are many pathways into homeless, such as poverty, lack of affordable housing, job loss or instability, mental illness and addictions, physical health problems, family or domestic violence, and family or marital breakdown. What sets veterans apart is that they not only deal with all of these same issues but they also struggle with their transition from military to civilian life. I talked about the military being a unique culture. Well, now the veteran is trying to adapt to a new civilian culture, feeling as though they have lost their identity and doing so without the social support network that was always so important.

Veterans of different ages, genders, regions and personal experiences have their own unique individual challenges that can create the conditions in which homelessness becomes a possibility. Tim Richter, the executive director of the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, understands this fact as well. He stated this:

I believe that with a focused effort and a sense of urgency, veteran homelessness in Canada could be eliminated within three years or less.

We have to document the names and unique needs of every veteran experiencing homelessness and have an ability to share that information among those in the community who can house and support them. We have to be able to monitor performance, notice fluctuations, identify problems and respond in real time.

We should carve out of the new Canada housing benefit a federally administered veteran housing benefit....

In other words, we need a plan, which brings us to this motion. Motion No. 225 calls upon the government to do three things to help end homelessness among veterans: set a goal to end veterans homelessness in Canada by 2025; table a plan to achieve this goal in the House of Commons by June 2020; and, when formulating the plan, the government should consider whether a national veterans housing benefit, similar to the one in the United States, would be a good fit for Canada.

● (1805)

This motion is well informed, but will it actually make a difference? I do not know the answer to that question. It is certain that we could, and it really could be a game-changer. However, up until this point, I do not believe that the government has been serious about ending homelessness, for veterans or anyone else. Some may think that is a harsh statement, but there is evidence to support my claim.

First, the government has no formal goal or plan to end homelessness in Canada. Its goal is only to cut chronic homelessness in half over 10 years. This past fall, in the week before Remembrance Day, this place unanimously adopted an NDP motion to end lapsed spending at Veterans Affairs. Lapsed spending is the portion of the money that is approved by Parliament for Veterans Affairs, but that is left unspent by the department for one reason or another. This leftover money is then returned to the treasury, never to be seen again.

Private Members' Business

It does not have to be that way. Our motion called upon the government to reinvest this money into improving services for veterans in the following year, and to do so until the department eliminates wait times and can meet all of its 24 service standards. Averaging about \$124 million per year, this money would be enough to double the staff at Veterans Affairs; speed up the processing of disability claims, applications for the earnings loss benefit and career transition services; and for every other program or service provided by the department to veterans. As this money was already approved by Parliament, there would be no additional cost to taxpayers, just better service for veterans.

Our motion was passed unanimously and was openly supported by both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance. However, as we heard, here we are in June, with yet another federal budget behind us, the fourth of this government, and there is no end in sight to either the lapsed spending or the enormous wait times and poor service at Veterans Affairs. In so many ways, this is a government of somewhat empty gestures and determined inaction. This lack of integrity hurts people, vulnerable people, people who need and deserve better from their government, people like veterans.

While I appreciate the member for Bay of Quinte bringing this motion forward, I do not want anyone listening today to be misled into thinking that this government has done something simply by tabling this motion. At the moment, they are just words on a page.

In closing, I want to reaffirm my support for this motion and again offer my thanks to the member who sponsored it. Ending veterans homelessness is possible, and this member has provided the Liberal government with a plan, a way forward, the means to end homelessness in Canada. Veterans need and deserve a government that prioritizes ending their homelessness.

With the tabling of this motion, the Liberal government is now on notice. There are no more excuses for inaction on ending homelessness for veterans. In fact, this motion is a call to action for the government. As I have said before, the government needs to take a page from the Nike playbook and just do it.

My NDP colleagues and I will support this well-meaning and thoughtful motion, and will continue to work with anyone in this place who seeks to improve the lives of veterans and their families. We will continue to demand more than words. We will demand action by the government to end veterans homelessness in Canada.

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, the chair of the veterans committee, for his hard work. My thanks as well for pulling everyone together on short notice on this motion.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to participate in this debate as parliamentary secretary. Veterans' well-being is very important to us, and this motion truly shows how, together, we can quickly make things better.

I am pleased to speak to Motion No. 225, which seeks to prevent and end veterans homelessness in Canada by 2025. Since we took office in 2015, our government has been working hard to help Canadians find safe and affordable housing.

In the 2016 budget, we restored the federal government's role in housing by making record investments. In 2017, we introduced Canada's first-ever national housing strategy, a 10-year, \$40-billion plan to provide more Canadians with affordable housing. In the 2019 budget, we further increased our investments in housing, turning the national housing strategy into a 10-year, \$55-billion plan.

All in all, since taking office, we have invested over \$7 billion in housing in Canada and helped over one million Canadians find safe, accessible and affordable housing.

Although the national housing strategy is designed to help all Canadians, it focuses primarily on the most vulnerable members of our society, including veterans. We are doubling investments in the homelessness partnering strategy by investing over \$2 billion to combat homelessness. We also set an ambitious goal of reducing chronic homelessness by at least 50% over the next 10 years.

We made just as strong a commitment to veterans. Since 2015, we have made significant investments totalling more than \$10 billion for veterans and their families. What is more, we created the veteran and family well-being fund, which enables us to support initiatives to combat homelessness among veterans.

We also appointed a point of contact in every regional VAC office across Canada to help homeless veterans. Last year, we brought together more than 70 organizations from across the country that work to combat veterans homelessness in order to find a way forward.

We implemented the veterans emergency fund, which gives us the flexibility to quickly provide support to veterans and their families when they encounter urgent and unexpected situations, for example by finding them a place to live until steps can be taken to secure adequate funding.

In other words, our government recognizes that one more person living on the street is one too many, and we understand that no one who serves our country should be left behind. This is why I am pleased to say that the government will support this motion. The member for Bay of Quinte has done excellent work as chair of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, and his work has resulted in a motion that I hope will receive support from all members on both sides of the House.

Private Members' Business

However, we realize that getting this motion passed in the House in a couple of weeks is a real challenge. For once, we need the House as a whole to pull together. Normally, in light of the little time remaining, the motion would be at risk of dying on the order paper. Frankly, this motion is far too important for that to happen. We have a duty to our veterans, and our government has made combatting homelessness one of its top priorities. Time is running out, but together we can get this done.

I hope that all parties will let debate collapse, which will allow this motion to move forward and enable the government to develop a plan to eliminate homelessness among veterans by 2025. Together we can make it happen.

• (1810)

Our request today to skip the normal two hours of debate for a private member's motion is an unusual one. However I think that members on both sides of the House, from all parties, recognize how urgent it is to adopt this motion. We must act now for our veterans instead of waiting even longer. We owe it to our veterans.

• (1815)

[*English*]

At this point, I would like to bring forward an amendment to the private member's motion, Motion No. 225.

I move:

That the motion be amended in section (b) by replacing the words after "June 2020" with the following:

co-led by the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and the Minister of Veterans Affairs; and

[*Translation*]

I believe that this motion has its place and that we should make an exception, on behalf of veterans. By supporting this motion, all parties are demonstrating that it is possible to restore dignity. That is a good way to end the session.

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty to inform hon. members that, pursuant to Standing Order 93(3), no amendment may be proposed to a private member's motion or to a motion for second reading of a private member's bill unless the sponsor of the item indicates his or her consent.

[*English*]

Therefore, I ask the hon. member for Bay of Quinte if he consents to the amendment being moved.

Mr. Neil Ellis: Mr. Speaker, I consent.

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise in the House today to debate Motion No. 225, veterans homelessness in Canada, which has been put forward by my colleague, the member for Bay of Quinte. This member and I have worked together here in Ottawa for a number of years, and since the 2015 election, we have been on the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs together. It has been a great privilege to work with him. We spent many hours discussing many important issues and what we can do to assist our veterans. I commend my colleague for his work in putting together this motion and for his time on the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs. It has been a pleasure to work with him.

Also, I would like to acknowledge and thank the many Saskatchewan members of Parliament who are speaking to this motion today and recognizing how we, in Saskatchewan, have had to deal with veterans homelessness, not only in urban centres but also in the rural communities we represent.

I would like to take a moment to read the text of the motion that we are debating today. It reads:

That, in the opinion of the House: (a) the government should set a goal to prevent and end veteran homelessness in Canada by 2025; (b) a plan to achieve this aim should be developed by the government and be presented to the House by June 2020, led by the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and supported by the Minister of Veterans Affairs; and (c) this plan should include consideration of whether a National Veterans Housing Benefit similar to the highly successful U.S. Housing and Urban Development – Veterans Administration Supportive Housing (HUD VASH) Program would fit the Canadian context, complementing the National Housing Strategy.

I add to that the amendment we just heard, which proposed using the word "co-led" instead of "led". I do not think we will see that as an issue in our discussions, at least from my point of view.

I truly believe that all members on all sides of this House are in favour of ending homelessness among veterans. If my time on the veterans affairs committee has taught me anything, it is that when it comes to veterans, almost every politician is willing to put aside partisanship for the greater good of serving those who have served us. While we may have differences when it comes to what that service looks like, ultimately we all want the very best programs and services for those who have fought for and represented Canada.

With respect to this motion specifically, I truly and wholeheartedly support the intent behind it, and it is only the effectiveness of the measures contained therein that I take any issue with. We want to provide the best possible service to our veterans who are struggling with homelessness, and we want to ensure that we are using the most appropriate avenues to accomplish that goal.

Veterans each have their own unique story, with their experiences shaping who they are and where they are today. We need to understand that while a group of soldiers may share a common experience, how they deal with that experience is different from one individual to the next. What rolled off the back of one soldier may have affected another soldier deeply. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to the issues our veterans face, and that is certainly the case when it comes to veterans homelessness.

One thing that we have repeatedly heard at the veterans affairs committee is the importance of a community. The best people to help veterans are their fellow veterans, because only they can begin to understand what their brothers or sisters in arms have been through.

We had many community outreach groups appear before the committee and outline the outstanding efforts they have made from coast to coast with the goal of ending veterans homelessness.

Private Members' Business

Veterans Affairs Canada, or VAC, has provided information about its programs and services to approximately 200 of these community outreach organizations that work with the homeless in more than 50 major cities across the country. This includes key information on how to contact VAC. VAC is also currently involved in outreach initiatives with veterans groups and community organizations to find and assist homeless veterans. I am glad to see that this is happening, and I encourage VAC and the minister to ensure that supporting these organizations remains a top priority going forward.

I would like to touch on some of the great work already being done in this country with respect to community outreach for veterans. As I said, we heard from many grassroots organizations that are taking a community-based approach to finding and assisting veterans in need with housing, social benefits, mental health assistance and much more.

One of these organizations, which has testified at the veterans affairs committee more than once, is VETS Canada. VETS Canada does an annual tour of Canada's major cities, where volunteers walk the streets in order to identify homeless veterans in need and point them towards the appropriate services.

● (1820)

It also provides emergency transition housing in Halifax, Vancouver and Ottawa. That is just a fraction of what it does. In fact, the chair and co-founder of VETS Canada advised the committee that about half its referrals each month come from VAC case managers. That is how effective this organization has been in getting veterans the help they need. It is truly incredible to see what people can do if they are willing to put the time and effort toward a common goal, which VETS Canada so clearly has.

I would also like to highlight an organization that we all know very well: the Royal Canadian Legion. Its Leave the Streets Behind program provides emergency housing as well as financial assistance to homeless and at-risk veterans. It also works in partnership with the organization I just spoke of, VETS Canada, as well as other community-based groups, to serve veterans that require assistance. I am not sure if many Canadians are aware of the full scope of the Legion's work, outside of its annual poppy campaign in the fall, but it maintains a national network of support, allowing it to address matters that come to it at a local level. It is modernizing and adapting to the needs of today's veterans and has assured us that it will continue to do so into the future.

Other areas that homeless and low-income veterans can access are VAC's veterans emergency fund, the Royal Canadian Naval Benevolent Fund, the Canadian Forces personnel assistance fund and the Montreal Old Brewery Mission sentinels of the street program, just to name a few.

One of the issues we have unfortunately heard about repeatedly in the discussion on ending veterans homelessness is that some veterans simply do not want to be found. There are a number of reasons for that, many of which a person who has never served would not understand. Veterans tend to struggle with issues that the majority of the population never will, such as PTSD from traumas that were personally experienced or things like a brain stem injury from being forced to take a medication with harmful side effects, such as mefloquine.

When people are stuck in the cycle of failing mental health, it can be extremely difficult for them to seek help. Many times, they will choose to self-medicate by using drugs or alcohol to cope with the mental turmoil they are experiencing. Homelessness is directly tied into this, as in some cases, veterans will lose everything, including their families and homes, because their mental health has deteriorated to the point where they cannot manage the demands of their day-to-day lives.

Even if veterans do seek help, they are sometimes turned away, as they do not meet the qualifications. For example, some veterans who are using medical marijuana are turned away from support programs that would otherwise help them, despite the fact that they are using marijuana under the advisement of a physician, as medication. The medical marijuana may be helping them cope and helping them get off the many neuropsychiatric medications and opioids they are on. However, they end up being removed or disallowed from participating in programs that are meant to help them, resulting in a continued cycle of homelessness.

Another thing we heard about, which was very interesting, was pets. I think that most of us here know how therapeutic it is to spend time with pets. They are constant companions who provide reassurance and comfort. People can pour their hearts out to animals and not worry that they will love them any less. However, it becomes a bit of an issue when we look at veterans homelessness, as the majority of facilities that provide emergency housing will not allow pets. Most people would not think this would be a barrier to housing, but it truly is. Time and again, I have heard that veterans are willing to give up their beds in a shelter or emergency transition home so that they can have their dogs at their side. This is a small facet of all the details that need to be considered when formulating strategies to end veterans homelessness.

I would encourage the government to listen to its own Advisory Committee on Homelessness when it comes to a proven method of reducing homelessness in Canada. The advisory committee's final report on the Conservative's Housing First policy stated:

A key learning in the national implementation of Housing First is that the Housing First model must be adapted to local conditions (like funding, community size, local housing type and availability), and must be tailored to meet the unique needs of different populations (such as youth, women, veterans, Indigenous Peoples).

● (1825)

I could speak to this for hours, but unfortunately, I am limited in time. I am proud of the work that is going on in Canada, separate and apart from any federal government initiative, with respect to combatting homelessness among veterans. While I do not think that the national housing strategy referenced in the text of the motion will actually be the catalyst for ending veterans homelessness, I am happy that the issue is getting the attention it needs.

S. O. 57

Our veterans gave us so much and served our country with respect, honour and dignity. They deserve the same in return, and it is our job to ensure that they get it.

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

I will just let the parliamentary secretary know that there are only about three minutes remaining in the time provided for private members' business.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be relatively short.

On all sides of this House, we have recognized the valuable contributions our veterans have made over the years and how they contribute to our society today. We have a wonderful opportunity to see this resolution pass if members could hold back on their comments and allow it to pass this afternoon. I would ask those who are supporting our veterans to recognize the value of the resolution and allow it to come to a vote.

The Deputy Speaker: We are down to about two minutes remaining.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the Bay of Quinte for this very strong motion. Every single person in this place will be supporting this motion. Members from the Conservative Party, from the NDP, and I am sure from the government will all be supporting this.

We recognize that there is a time frame. Rather than worrying about this going to a vote, let us worry about what we are going to do on the ground as Canadians and how we are going to help our veterans. Therefore, I urge everyone to not be caught up in the politics of this debate, as I see some members of the government are. Let us recognize that we can work very well with the member for Bay of Quinte, with the member for Saskatoon West and with all the different speakers. We just recognized D-Day because of the great men and women who have served this country.

Just because it is a motion that will be losing time and be lost on the Order Paper does not mean that in our hearts we cannot do what is right and help out our veterans each and every day.

This is a motion the members of the Conservative Party are very happy to support. We recognize that there is a lot of political stuff going on over this as they talk about how much time we have to debate. I have had one minute to debate this as the critic for this role. Let us not worry about the 25 minutes the Liberals have used, reducing us to 20 minutes.

I am being asked to call the question by a member who has sat there and ridiculed us, saying that Conservatives do not support this. We support this wholeheartedly, but it is very important that there is an opportunity to debate these types of issues.

We talk about things like the portable housing benefit. I would love to see that as we go forward with this. The portable housing

benefit is supposed to be coming in April 2020. It was introduced in the national housing strategy back in November 2017. If this is an idea we can put forward that would work for our veterans, it is something we should be doing. We should be working hard for our veterans each and every day. That is something that our party will continue to do.

• (1830)

The Deputy Speaker: The time for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

NATIONAL SECURITY ACT, 2017

MOTION THAT DEBATE BE NOT FURTHER ADJOURNED

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order.

In relation to the consideration of the Senate amendments to Bill C-59, An Act respecting national security matters, I move:

That the debate be not further adjourned.

The Conservatives will do whatever they can to ensure that the government does not advance legislation, so we will use our tools.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 67(1), there will now be a 30-minute question period. Members are familiar with what we ask now. Those who are interested and wishing to participate in the 30-minute question period will rise. We will then ask members to keep their interventions to approximately one minute. That will allow all the members who have expressed an interest to have an opportunity to do so. I remind members also that in the course of these 30-minute question times, preference is given to members of the opposition. However, that is not to the exclusion of members from the government as well. We will now proceed with questions.

The hon. member for Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-59 is the government's version of a supposedly improved national security framework. However, I am confused by what we heard from witnesses at committee and what the government continues to push forward. Therefore, I would be interested to hear from the minister why the government rejected an amendment to allow public servants across all federal governments to report information that they believe is connected or related to a national security threat. Why is the government blocking public servants from sharing information regarding threats with security forces or oversight committees? How does that improve national security?

S. O. 57

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this legislation has been before Parliament for almost two years exactly. It has had the most thorough consultation of any national security law in Canadian history. It has been the subject of extensive debate, many amendments and the most thorough examination of the law this Parliament has ever had. It is a complicated piece of legislation. However, I can say that it enjoys the very strong support of the national security agencies of the Government of Canada, those agencies that are charged with the responsibility of keeping Canadians safe, including the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, the Communications Security Establishment, the RCMP and the CBSA. It also has the very strong support of some pre-eminent academics, such as Professors Forcese and Carvin. Together, they are very anxious to see this legislation become law at long last.

• (1835)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, prior to the 2015 election, we saw the Liberals decrying what they quite rightfully saw as the usurping of parliamentary rights and privileges. It was not just the omnibus character of the legislation the Stephen Harper government passed. It was also the fact that closure was invoked regularly by the Stephen Harper government. At the time, the Liberals and the Prime Minister, quite rightly, promised to do away with that. Instead, they have doubled down. We now have this extreme closure motion that has just been moved in the House by the Liberals, which permits 20 minutes of debate on this particular bill. This is the kind of extremism, in terms of cutting down parliamentary debate and scrutiny, that most Canadians reject.

We have an omnibus bill. People have raised concerns about the bill, such as the fact that sensitive data on Canadians, totally innocent Canadians, could be collected as a result of the passage of this bill. Is that not the real reason the government is doubling down with extremist closure motions that only give a scant few minutes of debate, when there are so many concerns raised about this legislation?

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, I have to point out that this legislation has been before the Parliament of Canada for two years. This is not a precipitous debate or motion. The fact of the matter is that there were two years of public consultation, followed by two years of parliamentary debate, that has brought the legislation to the point where it is today.

Obviously, it is the function of Parliament to provide detailed scrutiny with respect to this legislation, which this Parliament has done to a great extent. The kind of inquiry this Parliament has made with respect to this law is absolutely unprecedented. However, it is also important for Parliament to actually decide and take a vote, and that time has arrived.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is great that I get to speak to the closure motion, but I wish I could have spoken to the bill when we were debating it. I would have talked about a lot of the national security issues that are facing this country, particularly the grave threat of China, which has been building a cyber-army that has been taking on a lot of the things coming into Canada.

The other interesting thing about the bill is that it seems to be undoing a lot of the good work the previous Conservative government put in place, which is why my Conservative colleagues and I are not excited about the bill.

I was wondering what the minister's perspective is on whether we are going to allow Huawei onto the 5G network.

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, that particular question does not relate to this particular legislation.

I will advise the member that there is an ongoing review process with respect to 5G technology. In examining the whole spectrum of that technology, it is designed, from a scientific point of view and a security point of view, not only to make sure that Canadians get all of the advantages but also that public safety and national security are absolutely and thoroughly protected. That review is ongoing, and the appropriate decision will be made at the appropriate time.

If the hon. gentleman is concerned about having limited time to debate today, I would remind him that this legislation has been before Parliament for two years and there has been ample opportunity for everyone to be involved.

With respect to the cyber aspect, this legislation is critical, because it presents the new legal framework for dealing with cybersecurity, including for the first time the authority to allow active cyber-operations when those are deemed appropriate to protect the Canadian national interest.

• (1840)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the efforts of the minister and his staff in bringing forward what I believe is a substantial piece of legislation. It provides a sense of security for Canadians and at the same time provides rights that can be traced right back to our charter.

In the last federal election, we made some serious commitments to Canadians about making changes to Bill C-51. Bill C-59, in part, deals with Bill C-51. I look at the legislation before us as another way the government has delivered some of the tangible things it said it would.

Could the member comment regarding that aspect of the legislation, which I know is important to all Canadians? As a personal thought, it is nice to see the legislation going through this final process.

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, in the last election we were very specific about the things we found inappropriate, deficient or headed in the wrong direction that had been enacted by the previous government. We enumerated those things in our platform document. Bill C-59, together with other pieces of legislation before this Parliament, has dealt very effectively with the agenda of things that needed to be corrected.

S. O. 57

For example, we said there needed to be a committee of parliamentarians to deal with national security and intelligence issues. We created that through Bill C-22. We said we needed to protect the right to civil protest and dissent to make sure those civil rights were never impinged upon. That is dealt with in Bill C-59. We said we needed to make clear that threat reduction measures would not violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That too is dealt with in Bill C-59.

If we went through each one of the items that were enumerated during the course of the election campaign, we would find that in Bill C-59 and in other pieces of legislation that have already been adopted by the House, commitments made in 2015 have, in fact, been satisfied by legislation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that I think it is a shame that the government is limiting debate on such essential issues as privacy and the fundamental rights of Canadian citizens.

For years, people like Daniel Therrien, the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, have been expressing serious concern about the fact that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service collects personal information about people who have done absolutely nothing simply because it wants to conduct analyses.

In 2015, I do not think that the Liberal Party was as explicit as that. Bill C-59 states that “activity that undermines the security of Canada” could include significant or widespread interference with essential infrastructure. That is exactly the same language the Stephen Harper government used.

Could this include demonstrations against pipelines, for instance?

Can the government confirm that it indeed believes that major demonstrations against the construction of pipelines constitute activities that undermine the security of Canada?

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, it is clear in the amendments included in Bill C-59 that the right to civil protest, the right to demonstrate and the right to express one's point of view within the normal laws and procedures of Canada are all clearly protected. That was an issue under Bill C-51, and we have corrected that by virtue of this legislation.

I point out as well that both the government and parliamentary committees have consulted about this legislation with the Privacy Commissioner, and the Privacy Commissioner's advice has been taken very seriously in the crafting of this legislation. As I say, the debate has been an extensive one. Every dimension of this new law has been thoroughly ventilated through one House of Parliament or the other.

I point out that the debate has gone on for so long that certain previous provisions of national security law have expired while waiting for the new law to come into effect, so it is time to vote and to take a decision.

• (1845)

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that Bill C-59 leaves Canada with a larger, weaker national security and intelligence

apparatus and is more focused on internal processes than external results. It is unfortunate, but the reality is that Bill C-59 focuses on policing the actions of national security intelligence agencies instead of criminals and extremists and what they do and plan to do to Canadians.

There are four oversight bodies that intelligence individuals need to be subject to, but it makes no sense to me to shift the security operations that protect Canadians to administration and paperwork. This bill would do just that. It would take \$100 million from operations and put it into administration. That is \$100 million focused on things other than defending national security.

I am wondering if the minister could comment on the reason for moving \$100 million to administration.

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman is just simply wrong.

In fact, the legislation would improve the security apparatus of the Government of Canada. It provides an unprecedented level of transparency, which is essential in ensuring that Canadians have confidence in their security and intelligence agencies.

The bill would correct a number of errors and deficiencies left to us by the previous government. It would provide brand new clarity about the legal and constitutional authorities necessary for the agencies to be able to do their jobs, and give those agencies critical new powers they would not otherwise have without this legislation. An example is the proper management and investigation of data sets, which is critical in this digital age. It is obviously important that it be done properly, and this legislation lays out the framework for doing it, which our security agencies would not otherwise be able to do.

It would also provide that new framework for cyber-activities, and in this era when cyber-threats, according to many experts, are the biggest threats we are going to face in the future, we need that capacity within CSE and other authorities of the Government of Canada to undertake—where necessary, and with the proper authorization—those active operations to keep Canadians safe. That is why this legislation is so important.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I do not feel, as leader of the Green Party, that I had adequate opportunity to debate what has happened with Bill C-59, particularly since it went to the Senate.

However, I want to say on the record that although it is not the perfect bill one would have wished for to completely remove the damage of Bill C-51 from the previous Parliament, I am very grateful for the progress made in this bill. What I referred to at the time as the “thought chill sections” of the language were removed. One example was the use of the words “terrorism in general” throughout Bill C-51.

The bill was tabled January 30, 2015, which was a Friday. I read it over the weekend, came back to Parliament on Monday and asked a question in question period about whether we were going to stop this bill that so heavily intruded on civil liberties.

S. O. 57

Bill C-59 is an improvement, but I do not think I have had enough time to debate it. I wish the hon. minister could give us more time. I want to see it pass in this Parliament, but I wish there was a way to allow time for proper debate.

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, as we all know, there are limitations that apply with respect to members in this House who occupy positions of third parties, independents and so forth. That is an issue, I am afraid, that House leaders, whips and others will have to resolve in order to provide those additional debating opportunities.

This legislation has been thoroughly vented over a period of two years, and that followed a period of almost two years during which huge public consultations took place and 75,000 submissions were received as input from Canadians before the legislation was even drafted. Then, of course, the bill was actually referred to a committee before second reading to increase the scope of the debate and the possibility of amendments among members of Parliament.

I suppose no one can say any piece of legislation is perfect. This one is a vast improvement over what went before, and I am very pleased to have the endorsement of external experts like Professors Craig Forcese and Stephanie Carvin, who have described this legislation as the most important national security law in a generation.

• (1850)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Picard (Montarville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security spent several weeks on Bill C-59. During that time, we heard from scholars like Mr. Forcese, who shared some very relevant remarks, as did the agencies.

I would like the minister to talk about the public aspect of the consultation. He said that tens of thousands of Canadians were consulted. I would like him to tell us how that historic public consultation met the needs that Canadians themselves had expressed.

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, let me first acknowledge the excellent work that was done by both the security and public safety committee of the House of Commons and its counterpart in the other place. They worked very hard on this legislation. The committee of the House actually did a pre-study before the legislation was introduced, and a good many of the recommendations that were made by the House of Commons committee found their way into the legislation when it was introduced.

However, the hon. gentleman is right. There was a very long period of public consultation that stretched across the country in town hall meetings, meetings with experts and ample online discussions. The hon. gentleman himself conducted extensive discussions among interest groups in the French language across the country, particularly in the province of Quebec. All of that was very helpful in making sure that when this legislation hit the floor of Parliament, it was well informed with the preferences and views of ordinary Canadians from coast to coast.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the minister and

the House that, when Bill C-51 was introduced in the previous Parliament, the Liberals who were in opposition at the time voted in favour of Bill C-51, regardless of all the freedom of expression and privacy issues it might cause, not to mention other measures that endangered Canadians more than they protected them. In contrast, the official opposition New Democrats voted against Bill C-51.

Bill C-59 makes some improvements, but as civil liberties groups have said repeatedly, it fails to resolve a number of major problems related to use of data and privacy protection.

I would like to know why the government was in such a hurry to move forward without properly addressing the major issues with Bill C-51 that are still present in Bill C-59.

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, after two years of public consultations and then two years of parliamentary debate, the fact is that there has been enormous input into this legislation. I do not think anyone could call that a hasty process. We also took steps along the way to ensure that the parliamentary debate would be very thorough, like referring the bill to committee before second reading to increase the scope of the examination the parliamentary the committees could provide.

The other important provision in the legislation about further review and ongoing analysis is the fact that we have provided for the entire legislative package to be reviewed again by Parliament in three years' time. The original time frame was three years and during the debate it moved to five years. I acknowledged the work of the NDP to say that it should be three years, so the Senate moved the date back to three years, and we are accepting that proposal from the Senate.

Therefore, three years from now, there will be another opportunity for members to examine how the legislation has worked and make any further changes that need to be made.

• (1855)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the minister's speech, he mentioned the use of datasets. He talked about sharing of information between inter-departmental agencies, and not necessarily law enforcement. Canadians saw earlier in this Parliament that Statistics Canada had been eager and very fervent in wanting to know our personal banking information.

What measures have been put in place to ensure that the data collection, the information the government is gathering on Canadians, is used for fighting terrorism as opposed to any other reason?

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, there are multiple safeguards in the legislation to that end. I would point out that we have consulted about many dimensions of the legislation with the Privacy Commissioner. The Privacy Commissioner has always been very generous and ample with the advice that comes from that very important organization. That advice has been heeded very carefully, particularly with respect to the sharing of information.

S. O. 57

In fact, there is a specific part of the act that deals with the information-sharing rules and legislative framework that will apply to all agencies of the Government of Canada whenever information is being exchanged. It will be important for records to be kept about who gave the information, who received the information and what threshold was applied. All of that is laid out in explicit detail within the terms of this new law, which was not there before. Therefore, there once again is a very important enhancement to protect the rights of Canadians.

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I hear the minister talking about the bill having two years of debate and consultation. In fact, that is a time frame, but it is not two years of debate.

The debate has been limited at every stage of a very important bill, one that would collect people's personal data. Therefore, I want to challenge the minister when he says there have been two years of debate. I do not believe that is the right characterization. There has been debate, but it has been very limited and we are here this evening once again limiting debate.

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, I simply make the point that we began work on the legislation from the very first hours when the government was in office in 2015. We started with the learned judgments of Justices Iacobucci, O'Connor and Major. We started with reports that had been filed previously by Parliament, both the House of Commons and the Senate. We listened very carefully to the review reports of the Security Intelligence Review Committee.

We conducted extensive public consultations, which involved 75,000 submissions online from ordinary Canadians. We had public meetings, town hall meetings and expert panels. Never before has there ever been an opportunity for Canadians to have input and for parliamentarians to debate the subject matter around Bill C-59. There has been the largest opportunity to do that in Canadian history.

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a good deal of respect for Craig Forcese and his opinion. However, there have been a couple of developments over the past two years since the bill was originally drafted, with the number of illegal migrants who have come across the border. This has created some security concerns. I know a great many of them have criminal records. The other one would be with the government not requiring visas for Mexican nationals. There are rumours and allegations that the Mexican cartels are operating more freely in Canada than they used to.

In light of those two developments in the last two years, does the bill adequately address those two situations and does it give our law enforcement the proper tools they need to do their job?

•(1900)

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, first, yes, the tools and powers provided for CSIS, for the CSE, for other security agencies of the Government of Canada, certainly for the RCMP, will enhance the work of all our security agencies.

I would point out for the hon. gentleman that in dealing with cross-border migration, over the last three years, we have faithfully applied each and every Canadian law in every case. We have also respected all our international obligations. The allegations of large numbers of criminals flowing into the country is completely wrong.

In fact, it is a tiny part of a fraction. In those cases, they have all been identified, they have been detained as necessary and removal proceedings have been undertaken to get them out of the country.

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, the minister spoke early on about two academics who supported the bill. I want to remind him of what retired Canadian Forces Lieutenant-General Michael Day said. He said he had zero confidence in Canada's ability to combat emerging threats with Bill C-59.

We know that the charter is mentioned 26 times in the legislation, but the minister should know that every bill has to meet the scrutiny of the charter. Privacy appears 88 times in the bill. We do not know why the government is so concerned about trying to police the agencies that protect Canadians rather than going after those who would appear to do us harm.

The last point I want to make is this. The bill is called undemocratic and one of the reasons for that is the rarity that the Henry VIII clause was kept in it, which means there is the ability of the Prime Minister and cabinet to unilaterally change legislation without coming through Parliament. I am curious whether the minister would care to comment on that manoeuvre in the bill.

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, the conspiracy theories abound with the opposition. I am not quite sure what his source of research is, but this legislation has had the benefit of the largest amount of public consultation, the largest amount of parliamentary scrutiny and the best experts in the field of security law and human rights law. It has been vetted in every way possible. The end result would be three things.

Our agencies will have the powers they need to keep Canadians safe. They will have clarity with respect to their legislative and constitutional authorities. Old areas and weaknesses in previous laws have been remedied. There is unprecedented transparency for Canadians to see and know what goes on in the public interest to keep Canadians safe and to safeguard our rights and freedoms.

In the next three years, the next Parliament of Canada will have the opportunity to revisit all these rules and provisions to ensure they are serving Canadians. This is the right bill for now.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Order. It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

S. O. 57

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1940)

[English]

Before the Clerk announced the results of the vote:

The Speaker: Is the hon. member for Calgary Skyview rising to indicate which way he wishes to vote?

Mr. Darshan Singh Kang: Mr. Speaker, I want to apply my vote and I vote yes.

• (1945)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 1350)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Arya
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Eyolfson	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Fuhr
Garneau	Gerretsen
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Hajdu
Hardie	Harvey
Hébert	Hehr
Hogg	Holland
Housefather	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Joly	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Kang	Khalid
Khera	Lambropoulos
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Mendicino	Mihychuk

Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Monsef	
Morrissey	Murray
Nassif	Ng
O'Connell	Oliphant
Oliver	O'Regan
Ouellette	Paradis
Peschisolido	Peterson
Petitpas Taylor	Picard
Poissant	Ratansi
Rioux	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Rudd
Ruimy	Rusnak
Sahota	Saini
Sajjan	Sangha
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schulte	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simms
Sohi	Sorbara
Spengemann	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Virani	Whalen
Wilkinson	Wrzesnewsjy
Yip	Young
Zahid— 153	

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Allison
Anderson	Arnold
Ashton	Aubin
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benson	Bezan
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Block
Boucher	Boudrias
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brosseau	Calkins
Cannings	Caron
Carrie	Chong
Clarke	Cooper
Davidson	Davies
Diotte	Doherty
Dreeshen	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Duscault
Falk (Provencher)	Fortin
Gallant	Garrison
Généreux	Genuis
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Hardcastle	Hoback
Hughes	Johns
Julian	Kelly
Kent	Kitchen
Kusie	Lake
Liepert	Lloyd
MacGregor	Maguire
Manly	Martel
Masse (Windsor West)	Mathysen
May (Saenich—Gulf Islands)	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)	Motz
Nater	Obhrai
Pauzé	Ramsey
Reid	Richards
Saroya	Schmale
Shields	Shipley
Sorenson	Stanton
Ste-Marie	Stetski
Strahl	Stubbs
Tilson	Trost
Trudel	Van Kesteren
Vecchio	Viersen
Wagantall	Waugh
Webber	Wong
Yurdiga	Zimmer— 96

Government Orders

PAIRED

Members

Fry
Kmiec
Plamondon

Goldsmith-Jones
LeBlanc
Thériault — 6

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

MOTION IN RELATION TO SENATE AMENDMENTS

The House resumed from June 7 consideration of the motion in relation to the amendments made by the Senate to Bill C-59, An Act respecting national security matters, and of the amendment.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to give a little ad at the beginning of my speech. Tomorrow is an important day. June 12 is Philippines Independence Day. I want to invite all members from all sides of the House to come out after their caucus meetings and walk across the street from West Block to SJAM to participate in the Filipino heritage event.

I want to add my thoughts in regard to Bill C-59 and I will approach it in two ways. First I will speak to the process that has brought us to the bill before us today and then I will provide thoughts in regard to some of the content of the bill itself.

To say that the issue of security and freedom is a new debate in the House of Commons would be a bit of a stretch. I can recall the debates surrounding Bill C-51 several years ago when Stephen Harper was the prime minister. He brought in that piece of legislation. At the time, the Liberal Party, as the third party, actually supported that legislation.

However, we qualified that support in a very clear way. We indicated throughout the debate that there were some fundamental flaws in Bill C-51, and that if we were to ultimately win in the election of 2015, we intended to bring forward some changes that would rectify some of those fundamental flaws.

I can recall the hours of debate that took place inside the chamber by members of all political parties. I can remember some of the discussions flowing out of the committees at the time. There was a great deal of debate and a great deal of controversy with the legislation. Even while campaigning during the last federal election, it was a topical issue for many people. It dealt with issues of an individual's rights versus having that sense of security. I always made reference to the fact that Liberals understand how important individual rights are. That is one of the reasons I often highlight that we are the party that brought in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

If we take a look at the original Bill C-51, even though the principles were very admirable and we supported it and voted for it, even though at the time we received some criticism, we made it very clear that we would make changes.

This is the second piece of legislation that has attempted to make good on commitments we made to Canadians in the last election. I really enjoy is being able to stand up in this place and provide comment, especially on legislation that fulfills election commitments, starting with our very first bill, Bill C-2. That is a bill I am very proud of, and I know my caucus colleagues are very proud of that bill. It concerns the tax break for Canada's middle class. There is

the bill we are debating today, Bill C-59, the second part of a commitment we made to Canadians in the last federal election, which talks about the issue of public safety and privacy rights. Yet again, we have before us another piece of legislation that ultimately fulfills another commitment we made to Canadians in the last federal election.

I mentioned that I wanted to talk a bit about the process. In bringing forward Bill C-59, I do not think we could come up with a better example of a minister who has really understood the importance of the issue, or who has gone far beyond what any other minister in the Stephen Harper era ever did, in terms of consultation.

• (1950)

Even before the bill was introduced, we received input from thousands of Canadians, whether in person or through the Internet. We also received input from members of Parliament, particularly from many of my Liberal caucus colleagues. We were afforded the opportunity to share with the minister and the caucus some of the issues and concerns that came out of the last election. A great deal of consultation was done. The minister on several occasions indicated that the comprehensive dialogue that took place allowed for a substantial piece of legislation at the first reading stage.

Shortly after that, the bill was sent to committee prior to second reading, which allowed for a more thorough discussion on a wider scope of issues. The bill was debated at report stage and then at third reading. It was sent to the Senate, which has sent back amendments, which is where we are today. That process indicates that we have a government, as the Prime Minister has often indicated, that thinks the roles of our standing committees and the Senate can improve legislation. We have seen many changes throughout this process. This bill is a stronger and healthier piece of legislation than it originally was at its first reading stage.

I wanted to give that bit of background and then do a comparison regarding why the government had to move closure just an hour ago. I want to make it very clear to those individuals who might be following the debate, whether it is on Bill C-59 or other pieces of legislation.

We have an official opposition party that is determined to work with the NDP, and I often refer to it as the unholy alliance of the Conservatives and the New Democrats. They work together to try to prevent any legislation from passing. They will do whatever they can to prevent legislation from passing. It does not take much to do that. At the end of the day, a few members can cause a great deal of issues to prevent legislation from passing. There is no sense of responsibility coming from the opposition side in regard to working hard for Canadians and recognizing the valuable pieces of legislation that would be for the betterment of our society. In fact, those parties will put up speaker after speaker even on non-controversial legislation, because they have no real interest in passing legislation. If it were up to the Conservative opposition, we would still be debating Bill C-2. The opposition members have many different tools, and they have no qualms about using them. Then—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Government Orders

•(1955)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members of the opposition that they will have plenty of time to ask questions and make comments. I would ask that they please hold their thoughts until the hon. member has finished his speech.

I have a point of order from the member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, the extreme closure motion that was just passed does not give an opportunity for the opposition to reply. I just wanted to clarify that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would ask members to listen closely, because they will be able to use the information as they see fit.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, let me cite a few examples. On the one hand, the combined opposition, that unholy alliance, will be critical of things like time allocation. The members will be critical because the government has prioritized bills and we want to pass them through. However, when it is a priority bill for the New Democrats, they have no problem saying that they want time allocation. They have supported time allocation.

When it comes time to get down and work hard for Canadians, we have the Conservative Party that will adjourn debate. The Conservatives will adjourn the House because of their unwillingness to spend time in a constructive way. The examples are endless. We remember the budget debate. I would not fault members if they do not remember the budget debate. That was when the member for Carleton stood in his place and literally talked out the whole clock. There was only one member who was allowed to speak to the budget, because the Conservative Party at the time wanted to allow its partners, the New Democrats, at least one opportunity to speak. One Conservative member talked for 14 and a half hours straight.

I raise this because the opposition members consistently do what they can to prevent legislation such as this from being able to move on. Then, they get upset if we use the tools that advance the interests of Canadians. The hypocrisy there—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have a point of order. It is getting very loud in here. Someone does have the floor, so I would ask members to hold their thoughts.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like you to clarify that the extreme closure motion imposed by the Liberals does not give the opposition the right to reply to these absurd comments being made by the member for Winnipeg North.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member is absolutely right that there will not be a right to reply. We still owe the member the respect of the House in letting him finish his speech in order to finish the debate here.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I am sorry if I am hurting some feelings on the other side. I recognize that the truth hurts at times, but that is the truth. Everything that I have said is true.

The opposition members can continue to play games all they want. I can assure them that they can stay in the gutter. They can try to put in all of the preventive measures that they want. They can attempt to adjourn the proceedings of the day all they want, but this government and this Prime Minister are committed to working day in and day out, right to the very last day for Canadians.

We will continue to be focused on bringing forward good, positive legislation, making a difference in the everyday lives of Canadians, whether it is through a legislative measure that we have today or the many budgetary measures that we have brought in. We know that our agenda is in fact having a positive impact on the lives of Canadians every day, and we are not scared to work hard.

•(2000)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, it is getting very loud. The hon. parliamentary secretary has only a few minutes left. I would hope that members would want to hear what he has to say. Although members may not be able to ask questions and give comments right now, they will be able to raise any issues they may not agree with during a different debate.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it is obvious that we have hit a nerve on the other side.

Let me focus on Bill C-59, which is a very important piece of legislation. If there were a part that I would highlight, it would be the national security intelligence review agency, an agency that would be more holistic in its approach. As opposed to having a review agency for the RCMP and a review agency for CSIS, we will have one review agency that ultimately has the responsibility for all of those security organizations, thereby ensuring we do not have independent silos all over the place.

This is really good stuff. I would encourage the members opposite to vote in favour of this legislation. Let us pass some legislation today.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 8:02 p.m., pursuant to an order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the consideration of the Senate amendment to Bill C-59 now before the House.

The question is as follows. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of amendment to House*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

Government Orders

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes) In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes) Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

• (2040)

[*Translation*]

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 1351*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
Albrecht
Anderson
Aubin
Bezan
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boucher
Boutin-Sweet
Calkins
Caron
Chong
Cooper
Davies
Doherty
Dreeshen
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Falk (Provencher)
Garrison
Genuis
Gourde
Hoback
Johns
Kelly
Kitchen
Liepert
MacGregor
Martel
Mathysen
McColeman
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Nater
Quach
Richards
Schmale
Shipley
Stanton
Strahl
Tilson
Trudel
Vecchio
Wagantall
Webber
Yurdiga

Albas
Allison
Arnold
Benson
Blaikie
Block
Boulerice
Brousseau
Cannings
Carrie
Choquette
Davidson
Diotte
Donnelly
Dubé
Dusseault
Gallant
Généreux
Gladu
Hardcastle
Hughes
Julian
Kent
Kusie
Lloyd
Maguire
Masse (Windsor West)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Motz
Obhrai
Ramsey
Saroya
Shields
Sorenson
Stetski
Stubbs
Trost
Van Kesteren
Viersen
Waugh
Wong
Zimmer— 86

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Amos
Arseneault
Badawey
Bains
Alghabra
Anandasangaree
Arya
Bagnell
Barsalou-Duval

Baylis
Beech
Bennett
Blair
Bossio
Bratina
Carr
Casey (Charlottetown)
Champagne
Cormier
Damoff
Dhaliwal
Drouin
Duclos
Dzerowicz
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Finnigan
Fortin
Fraser (West Nova)
Fuhr
Gerretsen
Goodale
Graham
Hardie
Hébert
Hogg
Housefather
Hutchings
Jones
Jowhari
Khera
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lefebvre
Long
Ludwig
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Soeurs
Monsef
Murray
Ng
Oliphant
O'Regan
Paradis
Peschisolido
Petitpas Taylor
Picard
Ratansi
Robillard
Rogers
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Sangha
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sohi
Spengemann
Tabbara
Tassi
Vandenbeld
Weir
Wilkinson
Wrzesnewskyj
Young
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Bittle
Boissonnault
Boudrias
Breton
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Chen
Dabrusin
DeCoursey
Dhillon
Dubourg
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Easter
Ellis
Eyking
Fillmore
Fisher
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Garneau
Gill
Gould
Hajdu
Harvey
Hehr
Holland
Hussen
Iacono
Jordan
Khalid
Lambropoulos
Lapointe
Lebouthillier
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
Manly
McCrimmon
McGuinity
McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Morrissey
Nassif
O'Connell
Oliver
Ouellette
Pauzé
Peterson
Philpott
Poissant
Rioux
Rodriguez
Romanado
Ruimy
Sahota
Sajjan
Sarai
Schiefke
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Simms
Sorbara
Ste-Marie
Tan
Vandal
Virani
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Yip
Zahid— 162

PAIRED

Members

Fry
Goldsmith-Jones

*Government Orders*Kmiec
PlamondonLeBlanc
Thériault— 6**The Speaker:** I declare the amendment lost.*[English]*

The next question is on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.**Some hon. members:** No.**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.**Some hon. members:** Yea.**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.**Some hon. members:** Nay.**The Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.*And five or more members having risen:*

• (2050)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 1352)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Arya
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Cormier
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Easter	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Fuhr	Garneau
Gerretsen	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Hajdu	Hardie
Harvey	Hébert
Hehr	Hogg
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Khalid	Khera
Lambropoulos	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Lighbound	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Manly	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)

McCrimmon
McGuinty
McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)
Monsef
Morrissey
Nassif
O'Connell
Oliver
Ouellette
Peschisolido
Petitpas Taylor
Picard
Ratansi
Robillard
Rogers
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Sangha
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sohi
Spengemann
Tan
Vandal
Virani
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Yip
Zahid— 155

McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Murray
Ng
Oliphant
O'Regan
Paradis
Peterson
Philpott
Poissant
Rioux
Rodriguez
Romanado
Ruimy
Sahota
Sajjan
Sarai
Schiefke
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Simms
Sorbara
Tabbara
Tassi
Vandenbeld
Weir
Wilkinson
Wrzesnewskiy
Young

NAYS

Members

Albas
Allison
Arnold
Barsalou-Duval
Benson
Blaikie
Block
Boudrias
Boutin-Sweet
Calkins
Caron
Chong
Cooper
Davies
Doherty
Dreeshen
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Falk (Provencher)
Gallant
Généreux
Gill
Gourde
Hoback
Johns
Kelly
Kitchen
Liepert
MacGregor
Martel
Mathysen
McColeman
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Nater
Pauzé
Ramsey
Saroya
Shields
Sorenson
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Tilson
Trudel
Vecchio

Government Orders

Viersen
 Waugh
 Wong
 Zimmer— 93

Wagantall
 Webber
 Yurdiga

PAIRED

Members

Fry
 Kmiec
 Plamondon

Goldsmith-Jones
 LeBlanc
 Thériault— 6

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

MACKENZIE VALLEY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT

BILL C-88—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That in relation to Bill C-88, An Act to amend the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, not more than five further hours shall be allotted to the consideration of the report stage and five hours shall be allotted to the consideration at third reading stage of the said bill; and

That, at the expiry of the five hours provided for the consideration at third reading stage of the said Bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would ask you to review the tape and find that there are at least one or two Liberal members who are flying paper airplanes in the chamber here tonight. We have seen a number of different things take place. I have never seen that before in all my years here. I would ask you to review the tapes perhaps, as members come forward. I know that several Liberal members were involved in passing the plane around. There has been a lot of discussion about decorum and so forth in the House. I have seen a number of different things over the years.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Brian Masse: I know that some members want to continue to heckle me down right now, but that is okay. Actually turning it to this type of a measure and throwing projectiles like that reaches another level.

I do not mind continuing to raise this issue, because perhaps that Liberal member or several Liberal members will actually come forward and talk about the fact that they participated in this type of activity.

This is not a ballpark. This is the House of Commons, and we would expect members' behaviour to at least have that type of substance to it.

The Speaker: I thank the member for Windsor West for his point. I will review the recordings to see if there is any indication of that. I would urge members not to be engaged in that sort of activity in the House or any other activity, including heckling, that is disrespectful in here. That applies to everybody. The member is correct. We ought to be concerned here about decorum.

Order. If members want to have conversations, they should have them outside.

● (2055)

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period. I invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places so the Chair has some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in this question period.

The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

[*English*]

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is an expression that I think should apply here: that the government's lack of planning and good House management does not constitute an emergency on our part.

This particular government was aware. It introduced Bill C-88 months ago. The Liberals have rarely brought it up for debate, and now they want to shut it down in the last couple of days of Parliament. It is a piece of legislation that deserves an opportunity for appropriate debate.

Again, they have had it on the Order Paper for over 18 months, and finally they bring it up in the last week. I would like the minister to explain what happened to the last year and a half when we could have been debating this legislation.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as with all legislation that responds to the kinds of negotiations that happen between indigenous governments, provincial and federal governments, this consultation needed to take place. We are now responding to what both Premier McLeod and Grand Chief George Mackenzie have stated in their joint letter.

We hope that Bill C-88 will proceed expeditiously through the legislative process and will receive royal assent in this Parliament. The negative implications of the status quo are significant.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to echo the comments and sentiments of the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo that after this bill was brought in, it did not even come to second reading until last Christmas. This is a bill that the Liberals knew they had to produce before the election in 2015. This was before the courts in the Northwest Territories. There was an injunction that was holding up litigation until this place produced this legislation.

Yes, there had to be consultation. However, it is my understanding that the consultation was completed in the middle of 2017, and yet here we are two years later and the government is saying that we have to hurry up. Well, hurry up and wait. We have been waiting for this legislation for two years, and now the government is saying that there is no more time left.

I agree with the Premier of the Northwest Territories that the bill has to be passed expeditiously, but we have not had a good answer from the government as to what caused these delays. I could speculate on other things, but I think it is a bit rich for the Liberals to say that we have to pass this right now and we have to have time allocation. They have had four years to do this, and I think that has to be noted.

Government Orders

• (2100)

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Speaker, this bill is a priority for the government and is essential to restoring the legal certainty in resource development in the NWT.

We have had two days of debate on the bill at second reading. The INAN committee heard from a number of panels of witnesses, and we are currently on our second day of debate at third reading. I believe that when this negotiation has taken place with the partners, this is sufficient debate and we need to get on with it and get it passed.

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in the previous government, Bill C-15 was created in 2014 with complete disregard for the land claims agreements. The Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act was created through the negotiations of land claims, and it certainly destroyed the trust factor with indigenous people in the Northwest Territories.

I want to ask the member if she would talk a little about how Bill C-88 would re-establish trust with indigenous people in the Northwest Territories, protect their constitutionally protected land claims and self-government agreements and restore legal certainty.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his ongoing leadership in all aspects of the Northwest Territories, and for his advocacy for the indigenous people and the indigenous governments in the Northwest Territories.

I would answer his question by quoting David V. Wright, legal counsel to the Gwich'in Tribal Council, at the INAN committee:

[T]he consultation process on Bill C-88 has actually helped restore some of the trust between Canada and the GTC. That trust would be eroded by any further delay, or at worst, failure to pass this bill in a timely manner.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the consultation on this bill was a joke. The Liberals phoned the Premier of the Northwest Territories 20 minutes before they made the announcement on the moratorium in northern Canada.

The Liberals are holding the Government of the Northwest Territories hostage with this bill, in the fact that they have put in one piece that the Northwest Territories wants and one piece that the Northwest Territories does not want.

Will the minister admit that she is just holding the territories hostage?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Speaker, I think it would be good if the member actually remembered what Premier McLeod said at committee:

We don't see Bill C-88 as a partisan bill. It ensures that land claim agreements are fully implemented by maintaining the regional boards, and it also has modern amendments with multi-party support.... The Government of the Northwest Territories supports swift passage of Bill C-88. The implications of not proceeding with the bill within the lifetime of this government and retaining the status quo are significant.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am very saddened. Sunny ways are definitely dead. Democracy is dying.

Tonight, we just had an extreme closure motion that even Stephen Harper never brought in. It was an extreme closure motion that did not allow for the right to reply of one opposition member in the entire House. There was a 20-minute closure speech. That was for a

bill that has raised real concerns around civil liberties and the fact that we are talking about metadata of innocent Canadians being kept without proper scrutiny.

What we had from the Liberals was a few hours of debate a year ago, and then tonight, closure. It is absolutely unacceptable. Now, with Bill C-88, we are seeing the same thing of bulldozing. Even Stephen Harper did not go this far. Liberals promised, back in 2015, to bring a new tone to the House, to actually work with opposition members, and they have chosen to do the opposite. Why are Liberals bulldozing through legislation that requires proper scrutiny and proper discussion?

• (2105)

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Speaker, I am very happy to answer the member's question.

I will just take some of the words out of Premier McLeod and Grand Chief Mackenzie's joint letter: "expeditiously through the legislative process"; Premier McLeod, "swift passage"; Chief Alfonz, "failure to resolve this matter co-operatively"; David Wright, "restoring trust"; and Grand Chief Gladys Norwegian, "will help to restore balance to the way the MVRMA operates and will ensure that the voice of indigenous board members will be heard."

The indigenous partners, governments, and the Government of the Northwest Territories want this bill, and I do not think that parliamentarians in this room need to be seen to be obstructing that.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, for this minister to say that members of Parliament who wish to debate legislation are obstructing the process demonstrates quite unbelievable arrogance on her part.

Since the minister did not answer the question from the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo or the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay, I am going to ask the question again.

This has been on the books for 18 months. Why, in the twilight of this Parliament, is the government invoking closure on a bill and claiming it is because the bill needs to be expeditiously passed? What have you been doing for the rest of this Parliament?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member that he is to address the question directly to the Chair. I can tell him that I have been very busy during this Parliament.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Speaker, I too have been very busy during this Parliament, as have all the members in the House. The legislation that this Parliament has been able to bring forth just shows how we have been able to work through this. I believe that the bills that are the result of agreements among partners should hold a very special place in this House in that they are the work of partners coming together.

Government Orders

That means that members have the right to comment on it. However, what we are finding with this bill is that there is huge consensus as to how necessary it is to undo the chaos that the previous government put in place. There were injunctions and legal uncertainty, because the Conservatives did not consult and there was no consensus. We got stuck with a really bad bill that the people of Northwest Territories have had to live with, and now we are fixing it.

Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the opposition members claim that the current regulatory system is complex, costly, unpredictable and time-consuming, and that the merging of the boards is essential for dealing with these issues. However, my understanding is that the merging of these boards landed the whole process in court. It has thrown development in the Northwest Territories into real legal uncertainty. Can you expand on why it is so important to repeal the provisions merging these boards?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member knows that he has to address the question to the Chair. I am not going to expand on it. I will let the minister do it, though.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Speaker, there are comments coming from the other side that are very unparliamentary.

The regulatory framework in the north is an example of how local decision-making allows good projects to go forward, stops bad projects and sends mediocre projects back to the drawing board. This is exemplary. When those boards were fused, it no longer had the ability to really respond to the local realities.

Grand Chief Gladys Norwegian said that “the proposed amendments [what we are fixing from the previous government] will help to restore balance to the way the MVRMA operates and will ensure that the voice of indigenous board members will be heard.”

This is extraordinarily important. That fusion had never been consulted on. The Conservatives dropped it into the bill at the last moment. It is unacceptable, and that is not the way that we are working in our partnership with indigenous people in this country anymore.

• (2110)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members that even though they may not like what they hear or be in agreement with what they hear, they need to ensure that they respect the rules of the House. Therefore, I would hope that the parliamentary language issue will not be a problem during the debate.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for North Okanagan—Shuswap.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have to stand today and say that never has a government spent so much and achieved so little. That is why we end up with this logjam of legislation that the Liberals have not been able to get through in the three and a half years that they have been stumbling along on this.

Talking about consultation, the minister says that the Liberals have done adequate consultation on this. I have to reflect back to the consultation that the government supposedly did on Bill C-68, which

we are also debating today, with the Fisheries Act. The Liberals spent over a million dollars providing first nations with the ability to provide briefs to the committee on the review of the Fisheries Act. Those briefs were never provided to the committee for its study on the act.

How can the minister stand there and say that the Liberals have done adequate consultation, when that is an example of how they have not done so?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Speaker, I have said a couple of times here already that when bills and legislation are the result of complete engagement between the partners, indigenous peoples and governments, the territorial government and ourselves, they are agreements that are exciting for us in Parliament to support. They came to the table, came forward with this agreement and there was consensus to do that. This is an exciting chapter as to how we can go forward.

The reason we got into this mess is because the previous government did not consult. It threw this fusion of the boards into legislation at the last possible moment, which resulted in an injunction, legal uncertainty, all of the things that created chaos for resource development in the Northwest Territories. That is what we are fixing today and that is why we need it passed.

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Madam Speaker, what we are discussing tonight is the fact that we do not have an opportunity to hear what the minister has to say, have a good debate and talk about a process that perhaps was very good and was built on consensus. This possibly is very good legislation. However, this is the House. This is Parliament. As parliamentarians, we have a right to review the bill and the government still has a right to bring it forward and talk about it. I may very well find the bill and the consultations good, but what we are talking about right now is closure on that debate. You are denying my right to review that legislation. That is the piece that is offensive to me.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member for Saskatoon West that she is to address the questions to the Chair and not the individual members.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Speaker, it gives me an opportunity to explain that legislation like the YESAA bill for the Yukon or the Anishinabek education agreement are bills that come together because of the real work done by indigenous people who come forward with their best possible plan. Those are very special bills.

The member knows that two days of debate at second reading, going to the INAN or other committees and a second day of debate at third reading is sufficient for these kinds of bills that come together because of agreements with our partners. They need to be passed in order to restore the legal certainty and the vibrant economy in the Northwest Territories.

Government Orders

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have the utmost respect for our hon. colleague across the way. However, I have said from the very beginning that there is no plan. If one fails to plan, one plans to fail.

The Liberals have failed first nations with respect to the suicide epidemic that has ravished our first nations in rural communities from coast to coast to coast. They have failed our first nations regarding boil water advisories. They stand here all the time, with their hand on their hearts and the minister wraps herself in an indigenous-flavoured scarf and they say this is their most important priority. I take offence to that.

I have been open and transparent with the House. My wife and children are first nations. The minister has failed our first nations. Time and again, first nations chiefs have come to us, saying the government has not consulted them on many different issues. I have reached out to the minister and she has failed to act.

Does she not feel this is another piece of legislation where the government will go down a path to fail not only Canadians, but first nations communities from coast to coast to coast?

• (2115)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before I go to a point of order, I want to remind the member that he may want to correct something. They are not our first nations; they are the indigenous peoples of Canada.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, as I said, my family is first nations people. My family is first nations.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is getting into debate now.

Mr. Michael McLeod: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I take offence to the fact that the member feels that I, as an indigenous person, belong to him. I also take offence to the comment that because the minister is wearing an indigenous scarf, it is offensive. That is totally wrong and unacceptable. I would ask the member to retract those statements.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the hon. member wish to address this?

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, I deeply appreciate and respect my hon. colleague, but as someone who has first nations in his family and has hung on the hope that the minister would follow through on some of the promises—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member is getting into debate. He either wants to apologize or he does not.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, if you will permit me, I believe I have the opportunity to respond to this. I will apologize and retract what I said, but it is shameful that the minister stands—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We do not need additional information. The hon. member either apologizes for what he said or—

An hon. member: He did.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We will accept that.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Speaker, I have been in the member's community. I know of the struggles in Prince George and the Highway of Tears. I understand his passion for this and his family. However, I want to let him know that Dorothy Grant, the beautiful designer of this scarf, is very happy to have me wear them.

It is hugely important that he understand the progress that has been made, which we hear about from coast to coast to coast. People are proud that we worked with the Inuit on their Inuit suicide strategy. People are very proud of the work we are doing on lifting all long-term boil water advisories. I encourage the member to go the website and see the progress. He can actually track it. We are on track to have all of them lifted by 2021.

It becomes unhelpful for Canada to have this as a partisan issue. We all know we could do more and we want to do better, but it is not right for some of these things to end up so partisan and so inaccurate.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, as is not uncommon for me, I find myself somewhat in the middle on this. I deeply object to this very harsh time limitation on the debate of Bill C-88. At the same time, I was here in the 41st Parliament and I did work against the legislation. It was clear at the time to be disrespectful and a violation of treaty rights to create a so-called superboard without consultation in violation of treaties.

After the decision of the Northwest Territories Supreme Court, which suspended the creation of the superboard, this legislation is almost a no-brainer. It is required that we get rid of the legislation from the 41st Parliament that ignored the treaty rights of indigenous people, but it deserves proper and full consideration in this Parliament.

Therefore, I object to the proceeding we are going through tonight, although I do support the legislation. I also do not believe it is inappropriate for any woman or man in this place to choose first nations designs to promote first nations designers. I find that level of debate really demeans this place.

We are here to promote reconciliation, democracy and respect for each other. The way we conduct ourselves in this place would make any indigenous person wonder if he or she wants to actually join this country or find a way to avoid reconciliation and go back to pre-colonial times, without the burden of the way we conduct ourselves in this place.

• (2120)

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Speaker, I certainly respect the member opposite's point of view and the advocacy she gave in the last Parliament of fighting against the fusion of these boards. I think the member will come to understand that there are special bills that ought to reflect the consensus and the agreement that first nations and Inuit or Métis have come to with Canada.

Government Orders

This means that we have proper airing as we have with the two days of debate at second reading, the INAN committee hearings and now this second day of debate at third reading. I hope all members will take advantage of the five hours coming forward and will speak if they need to. However, these amendments and changes are essential for the people of the Northwest Territories. I urge members here to respect that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is incredible that they are trying to derail the debate on the substantive issue, which is that they are curtailing our right, as parliamentarians, to debate bills. Once again, the Liberal government has not properly managed the parliamentary machinery, has woken up at the last minute and is trying, in a panic, to prevent us from having debates that are appropriate for us to have.

They are telling us we debated the bill for two days two years ago and that consultations were held in 2017, but that is not what we are discussing at this time. That is truly unfortunate. Earlier, the Liberal government imposed a far-reaching gag order. Opposition members did not even have the right to ask the minister questions.

The Liberals should look themselves in the mirror and admit that what they are doing is even worse than what the Conservatives did in the worst years of Stephen Harper.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Speaker, it is very important that the member understand that we had two days of debate at second reading stage and that we heard witnesses in committee. This is the second day of debate at third reading. Members must understand that, out of respect for indigenous governments and peoples and the Northwest Territories, we must pass this bill immediately.

[*English*]

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Madam Speaker, I have suggested that the bill, in spite of the fact that it has taken the Liberals so many years to get it here, is a paradox. It is about the consultation. What the minister has failed to mention is the fact that part 2 is an arbitrary move by the federal government to give extraordinary powers with respect to moratoriums around resource development.

Is it the position of the government that it consult to perhaps stop progress or stop projects, but does not consult when it wants to stop them itself?

• (2125)

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Speaker, I would like to reassure the member that face-to-face consultations with the officials from three territorial governments, representatives from the Inuvialuit and Inuit organizations, as well as the existing oil and gas rights holders were launched in March 2017 and concluded in July. The consultations allowed Canada to take stock in stakeholder interests, plans and a vision for future oil and gas exploration and development in the Arctic offshore.

All parties affirmed the strategic economic value to the north from oil and gas development in the Arctic offshore and supported the measure in Bill C-88 to authorize the Governor in Council to issue a prohibition order to freeze the terms of the existing licences in the Beaufort Sea for the duration of the moratorium so the clock would stop and their licences would restart when the moratorium was lifted.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

[*Translation*]

The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

• (2205)

[*English*]

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 1353*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Arya
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Cormier
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Dhaliwai
Dhillon	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Easter	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Fuhr	Garneau
Gerretsen	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Hajdu	Hardie
Hébert	Hehr
Hogg	Holland
Housefather	Hussen

Government Orders

Hutchings	Iacono
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Khalid
Khera	Lambropoulos
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Medicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)	
Monsef	
Morrissey	Murray
Ng	O'Connell
Oliphant	Oliver
O'Regan	Ouellette
Paradis	Peschisolido
Peterson	Petipas Taylor
Picard	Poissant
Ratansi	Rioux
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Rudd	Ruimy
Rusnak	Sahota
Saini	Sajjan
Sangha	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Schulte	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simms
Sohi	Sorbara
Spengemann	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Virani	Whalen
Wilkinson	Wrzesnewskyj
Yip	Young
Zahid— 151	

Plamondon Thériault— 6

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

THIRD READING

The House resumed from June 10 consideration of the motion that Bill C-88, An Act to amend the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Northwest Territories has six minutes remaining in his speech.

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate being able to use the rest of my time on Bill C-88, which would amend the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act.

This is a very important piece of legislation in my riding of Northwest Territories. The Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act is the legislation that defines our unique system of land and water management in Mackenzie Valley, which is most of the Northwest Territories.

I had left off yesterday discussing the previous amendments made in 2014 to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. The current amendments would not only fix the terribly thought out board amalgamation amendments of the previous government, but would also reintroduce all of the other proposed improvements to and modernization of the act that were halted with the NWT Supreme Court injunction.

These amendments were initially brought in by the members opposite, so I really cannot understand why they would be against Bill C-88. It must be their resistance to getting rid of the superboard and affirming the importance of the regional panels as set out in the constitutionally protected land claim agreements.

Other amendments in Bill C-88 clarify board composition when special representatives are added to the boards and provide for board member term extensions to allow for the completion of ongoing proceedings.

The amendments also allow for the creation of an enforceable development certificate scheme to clarify expectations for developers and enforcement agencies, following the environmental assessment. The development certificate amendment process provides for the reconsideration of specific elements of a project rather than having to undergo a full project environmental assessment for technological or environmental changes. Regional study provisions, if employed, would simply add valuable information to the regional data centre that could help inform responsible development.

The regulation-making authorities for administrative monetary penalties and cost recovery are also proposed in this bill and are consistent with modern-day approaches to resource management in other parts of the country. All northern partners, including industry groups, would be involved in the development of these regulations, which would provide further clarity on expectations, roles and responsibilities.

NAYS

Members

Albrecht	Allison
Arnold	Aubin
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benson	Bezan
Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boucher	Boulerice
Brousseau	Calkins
Cannings	Caron
Doherty	Donnelly
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Falk (Provencher)	Fortin
Gallant	Généreux
Gill	Gourde
Hughes	Johns
Julian	Kelly
Lake	Liepert
MacGregor	Masse (Windsor West)
Mathysen	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCaughey (Edmonton West)	McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Motz
Nater	Pauzé
Ramsey	Richards
Shipley	Stanton
Ste-Marie	Stetski
Trudel	Viersen
Wagantall	Waugh— 52

PAIRED

Members

Fry	Goldsmith-Jones
Kmieciak	LeBlanc

Government Orders

As we all know, there are those across the aisle who seem to not want to have a robust, inclusive and effective regulatory process in the Northwest Territories. The resulting ill-informed and cherry-picking amendments to the MVRMA were brought in by the previous Conservative government in 2014. The Conservatives' goal was to move decisions away from regional community members and restructure the land and water boards with a complete disregard for land claim agreements. As history has shown, the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories had a problem with that.

Indigenous governments have settled land claims. Canada and the NWT government worked very long and hard to conclude these agreements. They cannot be ignored for expediency, for political gain and pandering to interest groups. As we have seen in this case, and we will see in the future if required, if any level of government thinks it can just set them aside when convenient, it will end up before the courts and will not like the outcome.

Bill C-88 is not just about keeping decision-making in the hands of those who know best, the indigenous and northern people; it is also about targeted improvements to the regime as a whole. These amendments do both.

I thank everyone here today for their continued support. Hopefully, we will see some new supporters here today. These amendments would right past wrongs and certainly improve the regulatory system in the north.

I certainly want to highlight the initial work that the Tlicho government has done to spearhead the court challenge of the ill-conceived Conservative amendments back in 2014, which stopped the superboard from ever being created in the first place. Their successful injunction at the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories suspended those flawed provisions from being enacted.

• (2210)

Finally, I would like to thank the Minister of Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs for bringing them forward. I wish him well and look forward to seeing and working with him in the future.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have found it very interesting that as the Liberals have been debating this particular bill, they only pay attention to half of the bill, and that is the half related to the water board issue. They are completely silent on the very important second half, which is a direct paradox to consultation and collaboration. It is where the government is taking the power onto itself, in terms of placing moratoriums through Governor in Council, through the executive branch, for very vague national interest reasons.

I would ask my colleague to ignore part A in his answer, but look at Bill C-69, Bill C-48, the letter that was sent yesterday from the premier of his territory and part B of this bill, and tell us if he believes that the government is acting in the best interests of his territory.

Mr. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct the hon. member. There are not only two parts to this piece of legislation. There are actually three. The first part is referring to the superboard. The second part contains the eight regulatory items that were brought forward by the previous Conservative government that I think everybody agreed to and were focused on. When the bill

came forward it had the superboard attachment. In Bill C-88, we have a further piece which is the Canadian Petroleum Resources Act. I believe that is the part the member is referring to.

We heard loud and clear from the Premier of the Northwest Territories when he appeared as a witness in front of the indigenous affairs committee. The member was chairing the meeting so she was there when he said he appreciated how well the negotiations were going. There are negotiations that are happening with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and the Government of the Northwest Territories and the federal government that will bring oversight and co-management abilities on the Beaufort Sea. This is a piece that was ignored by the previous Conservative government. The Conservative government would not put the Beaufort Sea discussions on the table.

I find it very surprising when members are concerned about how we react to the discussions on the Beaufort Sea when the previous Conservative government would not include it. Neither would it include the Norman Wells oil fields, two cash cows that generate revenue. They were left out. They were not part of the deal. The Conservative government would not let them put these items on the table, but our government has.

• (2215)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

He probably already knows that the NDP will be supporting Bill C-88, which fixes some of the mistakes made by the previous government.

We agree on the broad principles and the fact that the people of the Northwest Territories should have the right to manage their own affairs and govern themselves when it comes to assessments and respect for the environment.

I do, however, have one simple question. My colleague, and all other members of the Liberal government, voted to support the bill that states that we must respect and include the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in every piece of Canadian legislation. Unfortunately, it has not been included in Bill C-88. I would like to know why.

[*English*]

Mr. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I would argue that this is UNDRIP in action. This includes all of the indigenous governments in the regulatory process. Every government that has agreed to and signed on to the land claim agreements is involved in the regulatory process in the Northwest Territories. Fifty per cent of the seats are guaranteed for indigenous people. We have a resource revenue-sharing component in the Northwest Territories. I do not think any other jurisdiction has that, a revenue-sharing component for indigenous people. They get 20% of the Government of Northwest Territories' share.

Government Orders

This is the best example we could have when it comes to inclusion of indigenous people. I think it is a model that other jurisdictions, including the hon. member's province, could look at using. Other countries have come to look at how we operate and how we include indigenous people. They see it as a very good model that we should share with other jurisdictions.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a lot of the debate has been technical, but I want to ask a more spiritual question.

When you make a treaty with first nations, like the treaties with the Sahtu, the Deh Cho and the Gwich'in, there is a trust there. They trust that the government will at least follow the treaty and it will keep its word.

Then, how does it feel when we pass a law in this Parliament that breaks the treaty, that is unlawful, that does not follow the rules of a treaty? This is not the first time it has happened in our history, obviously. I certainly think you would have strong feelings on this.

The Speaker: I would remind the hon. member to direct his comments to the Chair.

The hon. member for Northwest Territories.

Mr. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, it took many years to get to the point where the management and decision-making around resource development in the Northwest Territories could be agreed to in the form of the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. The government of the day agreed to it, signed on to it, only to renege a couple of years later, saying it was going to make changes, while not consulting with anybody. A consultant was brought in from Alberta, a consultant who specialized in oil and gas and knew nothing about land claims or self-government or any kind of legislation in that area.

I think it shattered the trust of all the indigenous people who were involved with the Mackenzie Valley resource management boards and also the people who were involved in the creation of the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. It has taken a long time. People wonder why it has taken so long to bring Bill C-88 back to the table. We had to deal with the trust factor. We had to convince indigenous people that we were serious and that we were not going to do what the previous government did, and that we were going to sort out all the issues before we got here.

Now, every indigenous government that has a role in the Mackenzie Valley boards supports this legislation. They have taken out ads in newspapers stating that they support it. The Government of Northwest Territories supports it. Industry supports it. It provides reassurance that they know the process and everybody is comfortable with it.

• (2220)

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have travelled with the member to his territory a couple of times, and I know how important it is to him that the residents of his riding have access to employment opportunities. I know that is important to him and to the people of the Northwest Territories.

In his remarks and in general in the debate on this, there has been heavy criticism of Bill C-15 from the previous Parliament. Neither of us was in the previous Parliament. Is the member aware that his party voted for Bill C-15, the bill that the Liberals are now describing as this terrible, poor bill that needed to be undone by the government?

Mr. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I am aware that Bill C-15 was a Conservative bill that really shattered the confidence of the indigenous people in the Northwest Territories.

It was a bill that never should have come forward. It is a bill that we are trying to correct today. There is an opportunity for my honoured colleague from across the way, who I travel with most weekends to return home, to support this bill. He has the opportunity to stand up now and support Bill C-88. I would appreciate it if he would do so. I think he knows the bill. He knows how important it is to the Northwest Territories. I think he is quite supportive of indigenous governments and resource development.

This would provide reassurance. I would ask the member to stand up and support this bill. Let us clear up some of the wrongdoings from the past.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I have noticed a pattern with the government. It consults when it feels like it. In the case of the tanker moratorium, in the case of the northern gateway project, and in the case of the Beaufort Sea moratorium, there was no consultation. How does the member align that with his words about consultation around this bill, when clearly there are many times when the government has utterly failed in that area?

Mr. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, the member fails to point out that the moratorium was only on new exploration licences in federal waters. She does not point out the fact that there was no activity. There were no applications in sight. Historically, over the five years prior to that, it was \$7 million. There is no economic boom if they are only going to find \$7 million spent in the Northwest Territories as a whole on oil and gas. Therefore, there was a natural moratorium.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise tonight to speak to Bill C-88, an act to amend the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act.

Once again, this bill, like many other bills we have seen in the House, is being debated and rushed through Parliament in the last few days before the House rises for the summer. It is worth noting that this is a bill that was only studied in our committee on indigenous and northern affairs for one meeting before we went into clause-by-clause consideration. As a result, we were unable to hear live testimony from stakeholders such as the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers and the Northwest Territories Chamber of Commerce.

We have recently seen these legislative delays with other important bills, such as Bill C-92, which was passed at third reading in this House just last week, on June 3. It is totally unacceptable that the Liberals have so utterly mismanaged their legislative schedule when it comes to the bills that are now before us, days before we rise.

Government Orders

Bill C-88 is a bill that forms part of a long Liberal saga to kill natural resources development in this country. The bill would amend subsection 12(1) of the Canada Petroleum Resources Act to allow the Governor in Council to arbitrarily ban any oil and gas activity across the Arctic offshore. Under this bill, the government would only need to invoke the national interest to ban oil and gas development in the Beaufort Sea. However, the term “national interest” remains undefined in this bill, so the government would have complete discretion to decide when it should ban oil and gas activities in the Arctic offshore. These opportunities for greater economic prosperity in the north would therefore be limited and controlled by the ministers here in Ottawa. Again, under the current government, Ottawa knows best.

We have already seen the Liberals reveal their paternalism when it comes to economic opportunities for northern communities. We just have to go back to December 2016. While the Prime Minister was in Washington, D.C., he announced that there would be a moratorium on offshore oil and gas development in the Beaufort Sea. No, he was not up in northern Canada. He was, in fact, meeting with President Obama in Washington.

There was absolutely no consultation with the Government of Northwest Territories before this moratorium was announced in Washington. In fact, the territorial leaders of the day were given less than half an hour's notice before the Prime Minister declared the moratorium, in the United States, the farthest destination away from northern Canada.

By single-handedly introducing a moratorium on oil and gas development in the Beaufort Sea, the Liberals are telling northern communities that Ottawa knows best. The Liberals are saying, through their actions, that northerners do not have the right to pursue their own economic opportunities without the approval of the current federal government.

We heard from multiple witnesses in committee about the devastating impact the Liberals' moratorium has had on northerners. Wally Schumann, the minister of industry, tourism and investment and the minister of infrastructure for the Northwest Territories, said the following about the moratorium:

I guess we can be very frank because we're in front of the committee.

When it first came out, we never got very much notice on the whole issue of the moratorium and the potential that was in the Beaufort Sea. There were millions and millions, if not billions, of dollars in bid deposits and land leases up there. That took away any hope we had of developing the Beaufort Sea.

We also heard from Merven Gruben, the mayor of Tuktoyaktuk. He was very disappointed with the Liberal decision to unilaterally impose this moratorium on northerners. He was very concerned about the effects this ban would have on the people of his community. He said:

● (2225)

It's so easy to sit down here and make judgments on people and lives that are some 3,500 clicks away, and make decisions on our behalf, especially with that moratorium on the Beaufort. That should be taken away, lifted, please and thank you. That is going to open up and give jobs to our people—training and all the stuff we're wishing for.

Unfortunately, the Liberals are not listening to the voices, again, of the northerners, and as a result, communities are paying the price now for the Liberal government's arrogance. There is absolutely no

doubt that Bill C-88 is just another attempt by the Liberal government to polarize oil and gas extraction in this country. It explains the power of cabinet to block economic development and adds to the ever-increasing levels of bureaucratic red tape that need to be navigated by proponents of energy development.

The bill makes northern energy development more difficult by increasing the obstacles that must be overcome by energy proponents before they can even put shovels in the ground.

In response to these polarized anti-energy provisions, many stakeholders have voiced their concerns. One of the numerous stakeholders that want to see the Governor in Council power to ban oil and gas development removed finally from the bill is the Northwest Territories Chamber of Commerce. It has written submissions to our committee. The chamber indicated its opposition to the final authority of the Governor in Council to ban northern oil and gas development.

The chamber wrote to us as follows:

The final decision needs to be approved by the Indigenous Nation of the prescribed area who are the steward's of the area but also rely on the land to provide economic independence to their membership and throughout the NT.

Of course, in pushing through Bill C-88 without any amendments, the Liberals have demonstrated that they do not care about the opinions and concerns of our northern communities, which will be deeply affected by this piece of legislation. These northern voices are once again being ignored by the Liberal government.

Another important stakeholder that expressed really serious concerns about Bill C-88 was the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation. Unfortunately, like the Northwest Territories Chamber of Commerce, the IRC was not afforded the opportunity at all to present live testimony to our committee, because, as I mentioned before, we were only given one day to hear from witnesses on this very important matter.

Again, the Liberals rushed the process. It was the result of the Liberals' mismanagement of the parliamentary agenda and a consequence of the fact that the Liberals left this bill to the very last minute for deliberations.

Like so many other crucial stakeholders, the IRC is opposed to the unilateral power to ban oil and gas development in the Arctic offshore, which the bill gives to the Governor in Council.

It is hardly surprising that the IRC is against the arbitrary power given to politicians here in Ottawa to determine the fate of energy development in the north. Bill C-88 says that the Governor in Council can ban oil and gas development projects when “it is in the national interests to do so”. However, does Bill C-88 tell us what the national interest is? Does Bill C-88 tell northern communities what the national interest is? No, of course not.

Like so many other Liberal anti-energy policies, questions of the national interests are only for the Liberals to decide and nobody else. The bill is simply a reinforcement of the arrogant mantra that the Liberals know best.

Government Orders

Given that the IRC was not given the opportunity to offer live testimony on this discussion on Bill C-88, I would like to read into the record some of the serious concerns the IRC highlighted in its written submission to our committee.

● (2230)

First of all, it bears noting that the IRC is an organization that was created way back in 1984 to manage the settlement that formed part of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, better known as the IFA. The Inuvialuit occupy the Inuvialuit Settlement Area, or the ISR, and beyond.

The IFA was the first comprehensive land claim agreement settled north of the 60th parallel and only the second settled in Canada's history.

Why was this land claim agreement so important for Inuvialuit people, and why did they initiate the negotiations with the Government of Canada? In the IRC's own words, the land claim negotiations "came in response to our limited influence in increasing development activity on our lands and the vast marine areas of the ISR."

In the short term, then, the Inuvialuit secured a land claim agreement, in part, so that they could have greater influence over development activities on their own lands.

With this background in mind, the IRC has written about its serious reservations with regard to the power the bill would give to Ottawa to declare oil and gas moratoriums on IRC lands. In fact, the IRC already saw the Prime Minister declare a moratorium in a significant portion of their settlement region when the Liberals were first elected to power in 2016. In regard to this ban, the IRC wrote,

it is important to note that the imposition of the Moratorium by the Prime Minister was done without consultation with any Inuvialuit in contravention of the IFA and with the framework established and the promises made under the Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement.

The Liberals simply seized the opportunity in 2016 to unilaterally implement a moratorium on oil and gas in the north while the Prime Minister, as I mentioned before, was not even in this country. He was in the United States of America looking for photo ops and free publicity. The Liberals did not consult at all with stakeholders before they took on this decision. What is worse, instead of apologizing to many of the northern communities that are suffering because of this moratorium, the Liberals are going full steam ahead with Bill C-88, as we see tonight, to ensure that they can unilaterally put bans on northern oil and gas development again and again.

Bill C-88 says that the Governor in Council can make these bans when it is in the national interest to do so. The IRC and Conservatives would like to know what the Liberals mean when they say "in the national interest".

The IRC had the following to say on the issue of the national interest:

The national interest criterion is problematic as it elevates the national priorities of the day vis-à-vis Inuvialuit priorities within our traditional territory. It would be akin to an appropriation a constituent might experience in the south without any restitution from the government. Bill C-88 does not define national interest or incorporate an express requirement to consider how the national interest ought to be balanced against the ability of rights holders to provide for their economic future.

Despite these concerns from indigenous stakeholders in the north, the Liberals have demonstrated repeatedly, through their anti-energy

policies, that they have no intention at all of ever balancing their vision of the national interest against the views of indigenous groups that do not share the Liberals' hostile attitude toward natural resource development.

Unfortunately, Bill C-88 is not the only bill the Liberals have pushed forward, to the detriment of the indigenous communities across this country. We have just heard from indigenous communities about the real concerns they have about Bill C-69, the Liberal environmental assessment act.

● (2235)

Stephen Buffalo, the president and CEO of the Indian Resource Council and a member of the Samson Cree Nation, said:

Indigenous communities are on the verge of a major economic breakthrough, one that finally allows Indigenous people to share in Canada's economic prosperity. Bill C-69 will stop this progress in its tracks.

Roy Fox, chief of the Kainai or Blood tribe first nation, said the following about Bill C-69:

...I and the majority of Treaty 7 chiefs strongly oppose the bill for its likely devastating impact on our ability to support our community members, as it would make it virtually impossible for my nation to fully benefit from the development of our energy resources.

Bill C-48, the northern B.C. oil tanker ban, is yet another Liberal anti-energy bill that the Liberals have rammed through this Parliament against the wishes of major indigenous stakeholders. Bill C-48 shuts the door to the Eagle Spirit pipeline proposal, an energy corridor that is supported by over 35 first nations and is an indigenous-led and indigenous-owned initiative. It is a \$17-billion project that has the potential to provide economic opportunity to numerous indigenous communities. However, as with Bill C-88, this one tonight, Bill C-48 is another Liberal anti-energy bill that is both hurtful and patronizing to indigenous communities. Bill C-48 is another example of the Liberal government here in Ottawa telling indigenous communities that they cannot pursue their own natural resource development when it does not suit the interests of the Liberal agenda of the day.

Indigenous communities are tired of the paternalism that has been constantly demonstrated toward them by this anti-energy Liberal government. The chair and president of Eagle Spirit Energy, Calvin Helin, who is a member of the Lax Kw'alaams First Nation, had the following to say about the viewpoint of the 35 first nations that are in favour of the Eagle Spirit pipeline. He said that these first nations "do not like outsiders, particularly those they view as trust-fund babies, coming into the traditional territories they've governed and looked after for over 10,000 years and dictating government policy in their territory."

Government Orders

However, the Liberals clearly do not think that these indigenous viewpoints are part of the current government's idea of a national interest, so they choose to ignore these voices. As a result of Liberal indifference to the concerns of these indigenous groups, in 2018 the chiefs council for the Eagle Spirit pipeline had to launch a GoFundMe campaign just to help pay legal costs in a court challenge to Bill C-48. The Eagle Spirit project noted the sad state of affairs by stating that this action is required to be taken by Canada's poorest people against a federal justice department with unlimited resources. Other indigenous groups have either filed lawsuits or are planning to do so pending the legislative fate of Bill C-48.

Sadly, the Liberals again did not listen to these indigenous voices then, and they are not listening to the indigenous voices in our northern communities today. It is glaringly clear that all the Liberals care about is the pursuit of their anti-energy policies at all costs. However, the cost is a very real human cost to the ability of northern communities to be in control of their own economic development opportunities.

The Liberals have promised time and time again to work with northerners. With only days left now in this Parliament, when will the Liberals finally live up to this promise?

• (2240)

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened very attentively to my colleague across the way, and there are so many things I could say in response. I know I do not have the time to do so, but I will have the opportunity down the road.

The member talked a lot about what is in the national interest of the country. I want to remind him that the national interest is defined by Canadian legislation. Several references to that can be found in different acts within the House. When I get a chance to speak, I can certainly point them out. Once he has an opportunity to read them, I am sure he will see more clearly why the phrase is used in the context of this decision.

In addition, what the member failed to talk about this evening is how the Liberal government has gotten to where we are today with this piece of legislation. We are here because the Conservatives passed a bill in 2014 that took away the rights to ownership of indigenous land claims and treaties in the Northwest Territories. The bill would restore those values, that trust and the agreements back to indigenous governments in the Northwest Territories.

If that trust had not been broken and the treaty agreements had not been threatened under previous legislation by the Harper government, we would not be here this evening having to right the wrong that was done to indigenous governments in this country. Why did the member not want to speak to that issue this evening?

• (2245)

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, I should note that I was not here when Bill C-15 first came forward under the previous government. However, of course, the Liberals voted for Bill C-15 in the last Parliament. Here they are now, saying it is no good, yet at the time, they voted for it. It is really interesting.

So what is the national best interest regarding the oil and gas in this country? Today, we saw the Prime Minister ridicule six premiers of this country, including the Premier of the Northwest Territories. They have major concerns over Bill C-69 and Bill C-48, and the Prime Minister took shots at all six of them today in the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are indeed talking about Bill C-15, which this bill seeks to replace. I was in Parliament when Bill C-15 was passed under the Conservative government. It sought to replace the regional councils in the Northwest Territories with one large pan-territorial council.

The problem is that those regional councils were created as a result of land claim and self-government agreements with indigenous governments. The regional councils were created through nation-to-nation agreements. The Conservatives unilaterally overruled those decisions without consulting the indigenous peoples involved.

I would like to know why the member wants to go backward. Why he does not want to have this conversation and work on this nation-to-nation relationship that was undermined and ignored by the Conservatives?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, we did have Neil McCrank, from Calgary. He did all the consultations regarding the superboard. He was one of the few live guests we could bring in on the one day we had to talk about Bill C-88 at committee. As members may know, other submissions were submitted through email.

At committee, Neil McCrank disputed that claim. He spent months talking about the superboard. As members know, the proposal back then was to go from four boards down to one. Members know the result: It ended up in court and we did not do that.

I want to put on the record that Neil McCrank spent months in the territories dealing with the superboard issue.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what does the member support in the bill?

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, well, there is not much, as members can tell by my 20-minute speech.

The minister said that the Northwest Territories government wanted Bill C-88 passed expeditiously. Why then did the Liberals sit on this bill for months, if not years? They had the opportunity to move this long before 10 days before the House rises. That is the question I had when the minister stood before us and talked about how great Bill C-88 was when, in fact, the Liberals buried the legislation for months.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on some of the comments my colleague made regarding the arbitrary decision-making that the government has done. The Liberals have not done any consultations. It seems that the Liberals' desire to consult is only when they feel like it, and that would be related to a number of projects, like the tanker moratorium, Eagle Spirit and the northern gateway. There is also the moratorium that was announced down in the United States.

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We are hearing increasing concerns not only from indigenous communities, who have not been consulted properly, but also from the premiers of these provinces. I speak in particular about a very concerning letter regarding Bill C-48 and Bill C-69 and how dismissive the Prime Minister and his party are in terms of engaging the premiers and indigenous communities to allow projects to move forward. The Liberals are happy to cancel projects, but they are reluctant to create an environment for projects to move forward.

● (2250)

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, the letters from six premiers to the Prime Minister came out yesterday. There are letters from the territories, New Brunswick, the premiers of Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. As well, one of the biggest oil and gas demonstrations this country has ever seen was taking place today in Calgary, Alberta.

It is shameful what the government has done with Bill C-69, Bill C-48 and certainly with this legislation, Bill C-88.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that the hon. member for Saskatoon—Grasswood, in describing this bill, which is about the restoration of indigenous treaty rights around rejecting the idea of superboards, among other details, has raised the issue of oil and gas, the need for development, and demonstrations in Calgary in favour of oil and gas.

We have a lot of discussion in this place about the need to recognize a climate emergency. I wonder if my hon. colleague has any particular notion of when we should stop expanding oil and gas, and how quickly we need to phase out oil and gas in order to avoid catastrophic impacts from the climate crisis.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, Canadians are looking forward to seeing the Green Party policy because it has been under the rug for so many years. Now it has a little jump in its step from the by-election and Canadians are really going to know what the Green Party stands for. It wants to shut down oil and gas. It would rather get it from Venezuela and other countries, not Canadian clean energy.

I am wondering where the Green Party will go in October, because it is not going to be welcomed in my province of Saskatchewan. The Green Party will not be welcomed in Alberta. It will be interesting to see where the party goes once its policies are looked at by Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak on Bill C-88, and I acknowledge that I do so on traditional Algonquin territory.

I will be splitting my time with the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

This important bill demonstrates the Government of Canada's commitment to the north and to the people who live there.

The legislation now before us proposes to amend the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act. This bill would reverse legislation that aimed to amalgamate three regional land and water boards established under comprehensive land claim agreements in the Northwest Territories. It would also modernize the overall regulatory regime that oversees the

development of resources along the Mackenzie Valley and in the offshore Arctic.

Perhaps most significantly, though, Bill C-88 would be a tremendous win for the environment. With the devastating effects of climate change that are evident in the Arctic more than anywhere else in the world, we all know how important this is. While Canada's north is rich in natural resources, it is also a fragile and rapidly changing environment. I am sure that my hon. colleagues will agree that it needs to be handled with care.

How do we do that? We would take a big step forward with Bill C-88 on what I call the three Ps of environmental responsibility: people, protection and prosperity. Bill C-88 would provide the right people with the right regulatory tools to make the right decisions for the environment and for Canada.

The first P in environmental responsibility is people, and one of the best ways to care for the environment in the north is to involve the people who live there in decisions about development projects. In the same way that urban communities across Canada invite residents to have a say in proposed developments in their neighbourhoods, northerners must also have a meaningful say in how natural resources are managed in their region. Bill C-88 aims to do this in the best possible way.

Most importantly, the legislation would repeal provisions in the Northwest Territories Devolution Act that would have eliminated the regional panels of the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board and established a single consolidated board. Bill C-88 would reverse the board restructuring and reintroduce other regulatory elements to function under the existing four-board structure, including the Gwich'in Land and Water Board, the Sahtu Land and Water Board, the Wek'èezhii Tlicho Land and Water Board and the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board.

These are all independent, co-managed boards that have appointed members who bring valuable local and traditional knowledge to the table. These members have the experience and local knowledge needed to effectively review and influence resource and development projects, as only they can. It is also important to know that the regional land and water boards are part of the existing land claim agreements, and that respecting these agreements is crucial to reconciliation with indigenous peoples.

Government Orders

The second P of environment responsibility is protection. A scientific report from Environment and Climate Change Canada shows that the Arctic is being hit hardest by climate change. The region is warming at a rate that is about three times faster than the rest of the world. In winter, this means melting permafrost and less sea ice. By the middle of this century, most marine regions in the Canadian Arctic may be ice free for at least a month at a time.

● (2255)

This would change everything. The habitat of ice-dependent wildlife, such as narwhals, polar bears and walruses, would be severely impacted. The Arctic caribou population would be at risk, because these animals rely on sea ice for their long-distance migration. Various species of fish would likely move away from where they are usually harvested in search of colder water temperatures. Of course, the melting sea ice would likely open new shipping routes and expose more fossil fuel reserves to development.

What is clear is that we have to understand what is happening to the environment and protect it, for both current and future generations. Bill C-88 would help us accomplish this goal. This is because the legislation also proposes amendments to the Canada Petroleum Resources Act, CPRA, which regulates oil and gas rights on federal Crown lands in the north and in offshore areas not under federal-provincial co-management.

The CPRA amendments support commitments made by Canada and the United States in the joint Arctic leaders' statement of 2016. The two nations agreed to base decisions about the future development of offshore oil and gas resources in the Arctic on scientific reviews that would be conducted every five years.

Bill C-88 would encourage governments and local communities to work together and move forward with both scientific and traditional knowledge to protect and develop the rich natural environment. It is so important that we take our indigenous knowledge into account, which has existed for thousands of years and that has a far greater understanding of the Arctic than any other Canadian does. We need to ensure that traditional knowledge is taken into account when we are considering any resource projects or otherwise that occur in the north.

Bill C-88 would encourage governments and local communities to work together, to move forward with both scientific and traditional knowledge to protect and develop the rich natural environment.

This brings me to my third P of environmental responsibility, and that is prosperity. Canada's prosperity, in many ways, relies on the development of natural resources. As the Right Hon. Prime Minister said recently at the 2019 Nature Champions Summit in Montreal, "We can't afford to ignore climate change." The future of our country and our economy depends on it. "You cannot have a plan for the future of our economy as a country, as a nation, if you don't also have a plan for environment sustainability and environmental protection."

Bill C-88 would support a robust regulatory regime that not only protects the environment, but also provides a responsible approach to the development of natural resources. Furthermore, renewing the relationship with northern and indigenous organizations and

governments is the proper and just way to move forward in partnership, with legal certainty in regard to environmental protection and toward increased investment and jobs.

All told, I would suggest that this is what reconciliation is all about. It is establishing that relationship with indigenous communities that can be based on trust. That trust is only going to happen if we have meaningful and collaborative consultation with our indigenous communities.

It is about making sure that indigenous peoples have a meaningful voice in important decisions about their lands, their lives and their future. Bill C-88 would enable a resilient resource sector while also respecting the rights and interests of indigenous peoples.

The three Ps of environmental protection, people, protection and prosperity, are the key drivers of Bill C-88. They are also sound reasons to support the proposed legislation. This legislation is finally going to bring about an environment where all indigenous peoples in the north will feel they can actively participate in determining what happens with that environment, what happens with their economy, and what happens with their future, for both today and for their children and grandchildren. Once again, indigenous people always look out seven generations. We need to take that into consideration in the north.

I encourage my hon. colleagues to vote in favour of Bill C-88 at third reading.

● (2300)

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the things that my hon. colleague did not bring up was the fact that the government has imposed a drilling moratorium on the North Sea and that this moratorium was put in place without any consultation with the Northwest Territories. The government gave the premier a phone call 20 minutes before making the announcement in the United States to a foreign audience. So much for consultation.

Will this member agree that there was no consultation on the northern drilling ban?

Mr. Mike Bossio: Mr. Speaker, it has been great to work with my colleague over the last number of years on the indigenous committee. I think we accomplished a lot of great things together, on many different bills and many different reports, that I feel have made a difference in the lives of indigenous people. I thank him for serving on that committee and his contribution to it.

However, I do not agree with the premise of his question. The Premier of the Northwest Territories and Inuvialuit both agree that they are making great progress right now in negotiations on how to properly develop the resources both in the Beaufort Sea and the Norman Wells oil fields. These are two areas which I have to say the previous government did not consider involving indigenous communities in consultation. Let us face it. That has been the reason that so many big projects like this in the past have failed, because of a lack of proper consultation.

Our government is taking the time to consult with those communities to ensure that they determine the future development of those resources.

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• (2305)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I think that he already knows that the NDP will support Bill C-88, which will fix some of the mistakes made by the previous government. This bill is a step in the right direction.

Unfortunately, I do not really understand the lack of consistency. The Liberals voted in favour of the bill to include in federal legislation the principles of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, but unfortunately those principles are nowhere to be found in Bill C-88.

I would like my colleague to explain that inconsistency to me.

[*English*]

Mr. Mike Bossio: Mr. Speaker, as we heard earlier this evening from other colleagues, and in particular, my colleague from the Northwest Territories, this bill is UNDRIP in action. Indigenous peoples feel that this includes a lot of what they have been seeking for a very long time. This is going to correct a lot of the failures of the previous legislation.

I am grateful that the NDP are fully in support of this bill. It is the right thing to do. Once again, indigenous communities need to start taking control of what happens with their resources. There are going to be 50 seats guaranteed in this legislation for indigenous communities, 50% of seats, with revenue sharing that is going to happen with indigenous peoples and communities. There will be 20% of the revenue coming from the Northwest Territories to indigenous peoples.

I understand why the NDP would be supporting it, because it is a good bill; it is the right thing to do and it is long overdue. My thanks for that support and for the question.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, briefly, the member is a real champion of rural Canada. His constituents are very lucky. He is always standing up for the rural small communities. How does he think small communities felt when the Conservatives overrode something they had constitutional protection for and that they had negotiated over the years?

Mr. Mike Bossio: Mr. Speaker, simply, it shatters the trust completely. Rural Canadians are very generous, and indigenous peoples are very generous people, but if someone breaks that trust, it takes a very long time to earn that trust back again.

This bill will go a long way towards earning that trust, because so much consultation was done in the writing of the legislation. Once again, Premier McLeod and many leaders in the indigenous communities are in full support of this bill. They want this bill to be passed expeditiously, as soon as possible. We heard that in testimony at committee many, many times.

I encourage everyone in this House to please vote for Bill C-88.

Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I may have been a reluctant politician, but I quickly realized the importance of changing public policy. I have always believed that if we develop an ethic of care and stewardship for the

planet and our environment, that ethic will naturally extend to all living things, including our neighbours.

I brought that approach to my 17 years of public service, 10 years federally and seven years locally, through six campaigns. This job is special, demanding but amazing.

I have had the good fortune to meet world leaders, national figures, celebrities and community heroes, like the Dalai Lama, Dr. Jane Goodall, Alexandra Cousteau, Rob Stewart, Alex Trebek, Rick Hansen, David Suzuki, Sam Waterston and Kevin Estrada to name a few.

I have participated in some incredible events, from witnessing an exoneration ceremony of powerful Tsilhqot'in leaders drumming on the House of Commons floor to taking part in a once-in-a-lifetime Canada C3 trip to deliver homemade, all-natural garden care products by students from Parkland Elementary School to the prime minister in 2010.

I have had some proud moments, like the passing of my motion calling on the government to recognize its sacred obligation to look after veterans and their families, which passed unanimously, to co-founding the all-party oceans caucus in 2012, which I hope will continue in the 43rd Parliament.

I have led effective campaigns, like banning the importation of shark fins to Canada, which hopefully will become law very soon; my wild salmon campaign, where Captain Kirk, William Shatner, joined me to save wild salmon by transitioning west coast salmon farms to closed containment; celebrating a win, seeing the Kitsilano Coast Guard Station finally reopen; and rewarding case work.

Here is just one example. Karin in my office worked hard for 10 years, my entire career as an MP, to reunite Kabondo with his wife Emmerence. They were separated during the Congo civil war in 1998. Emmerence moved to Canada and saved enough money from her cleaning job to visit the refugee camp where he was in 2014. Finally, in 2018, the family was reunited 20 years later in Canada. I thank Canada. There were sad cases, like the tragic circumstances of little Alan Kurdi and his Syrian family.

Through it all, it has been a team effort: my family, my wife Lynda, my parents Val and Cy, my brother Liam and all my relatives and close friends, like Doug Radies. I had my NDP team: from Dawn Black, the member who passed the torch to me, to leaders like Jack Layton, Nycole Turmel, Tom Mulcair and now the member for Burnaby South.

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I want to mention my teammates, current and former: my roommate, the incredible member for Vancouver Kingsway, whose quick wit and sense of humour is matched only by his generosity; my seatmate, the unstoppable member for Edmonton Strathcona; the ever-talented member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley; the knowledgeable and so-connected member for Victoria; the inspiring, youthful member for Sherbrooke; the dean of our caucus, the member for Windsor West; and all my colleagues.

I also want to mention my good friends: the mayor of Vancouver, Kennedy Stewart; B.C. premier, John Horgan; my amigos, Malcolm Allen and Jack Harris; amazing formers like Megan Leslie, Libby Davies, Chris Charlton, Joe Comartin, Denise Savoie and Jean Crowder; and the incorrigible Pat Martin, who once had to leave his seat during a vote because of an underwear sale at the Bay. I still laugh at that today.

● (2310)

There was our dear friend, Paul Dewar. I want to mention my political heroes, John Cashore and Dave Driscoll, local champions like Diane Thorne and Selina Robinson, community heroes like Elaine Golds, Ruth Foster, Rod MacVicar, Natalie Thomas and Fred Soofi, and first nation leaders, Shawn Atleo, Bob Chamberlain and Grand Chief Stewart Philip.

I also want to mention Legion Branch 263 and Branch 119 and my amazing campaign team, Tania Jarzebiak, Cheryl Greenhalgh, Alex Ng, and Anne Ladouceur, and my hard-working executives. There are so many incredible volunteers. There is my wonderful staff, Karin Kreuzkamp, Roberta Webster, Nick Watts and Andrew Christie, and Brynn, Mark, Coree, Sophia, Melissa, Melanie, Matt, Nicole, Natasha, Noah and Dan.

I want to mention those who helped me and working people, Jim Sinclair, Mark Hancock, Paul Moist, Ivan Limpricht, Tom Dufresne, John Baile, Geoff Devilin, Keegan Gordon, Marcel Marsolais and Kenny Neumann.

There is our team in the lobby, Rob and Jeremy, Christian, Anthony, Chuck, Audrey, Dominic and the whole gang.

There is my Rivershed Society of B.C. family and all the ENGOS that do such amazing work across our country. There are Oceana, HSI, PSF, DSF, WWF, West Coast Environmental Law and the scientific heroes like Dr. Kristi Miller-Saunders, Alex Morton and Brian Riddell.

I say to the Prime Minister, I welcome him to paddle the Fraser with me any time. I say to the member for Beauséjour, get well soon. It has been a pleasure working with him. I want to mention my oceans caucus co-chairs, the member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, and you, Mr. Speaker, the member for Simcoe North, true gentlemen.

There is the member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, with whom I traded many a verbal joust. By the way, you still owe me, my friend. There is the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, and the parliamentary secretary. I enjoyed working with them and their staff. There is the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, to whom I say, a swim any time.

I say to the leader of the Green Party, good job on Bill S-203. I want to acknowledge Senator MacDonald for working together to save sharks.

I thank all the security guards for keeping us safe, especially during the 2014 shooting in Centre Block. I say a special shout-out and thank you to Sergeant-at-Arms Pat McDonell and former sergeant-at-arms Kevin Vickers.

I say thank you to the clerks, pages, interpreters, committee staff, bus drivers, cafeteria staff, mail room staff, custodians and maintenance team.

Finally, to all those who are running again, I wish them the best of luck. May the 43rd Parliament come together to make Canada an even better place to live, work and raise a family. Please, please work hard to transition our country as fast as possible to a low-carbon future. Be bold. Make tough decisions. Co-operate. Put us on a path to a sustainable future.

I will be working to heal and protect the Fraser watershed, one of the most biologically diverse watersheds in North America and one of the most magnificent areas in all of Canada. To the next MP for Port Moody—Coquitlam, Bonita Zarrillo, I wish the best of luck. I look forward to seeing her here in the House of Commons.

Hych'ka O'Siem.

● (2315)

The Deputy Speaker: We will go to the five-minute round, which is usually for questions and comments. According to recent tradition, we will have three members comment and then we will go back to the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam for a brief response.

The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am a new member in the House. While I have had the privilege over the last four years to get to know the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, being from B.C., I have known him for a long period of time. This is a member who swam the Fraser going through my riding, not once but twice. The first time he was young enough that he had water wings on.

This gentleman walks the walk and talks the talk. I have come to know and respect him over the last four years, being on the fisheries committee. He truly believes what he speaks. His heart is in the right place. Although we come from different political stripes, I truly respect him and cherish the time with him. I am a better person, I know that.

I will never forget travelling with my hon. colleague. We get to know people in the House in a very partisan way, but we truly get to know our colleagues when we travel with them. That is when we truly become friends, because partisan politics are put aside. During the week I spent with my hon. colleague, I got to see first-hand his passion for protecting our oceans.

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I also got to spend a day, traipsing around London. He gave me these words of wisdom by which I live: Happy wife, happy life. I will not go into the details, but he bought a gift for his wife that was far more generous than I would get away with, but that speaks volumes.

I think the world of this man. It is shameful he is speaking at 11:15 in the evening. Somebody of his calibre should be speaking earlier in the evening, when the House is packed. He deserves that. I want to thank him for making this a better place.

• (2320)

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member not only for his service, but for his advocacy in this place, particularly as someone who is gravely concerned about our oceans. I look to the advocacy of this member with great regard.

Becoming a new member in this place in 2015, I, frankly, stole the work of the member and his advocacy to tackle the issue of shark finning. It is incredible to see that advocacy start so many years ago and that we will see come to fruition very shortly. It would not have come to fruition but for the member.

The only other thing I will say beyond his significant advocacy for our oceans and wildlife is the way he conducts himself in this place, not only in a committed way but a non-partisan way. Building constructive relationships throughout the House is a testament to his character. It is how members of Parliament ought to conduct themselves at all times.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am humbled to be standing in this place as the new critic for fisheries and oceans, following in the footsteps of someone who is a legend in the House and in coastal British Columbia.

On behalf of British Columbians and people from coast to coast to coast, we are forever indebted to this man for his advocacy and his fight for salmon. He has spoken more about salmon than anyone out of 338 members of Parliament. He has fought for fish and the health of our oceans.

Again, we are forever indebted to this member of Parliament. We wish him the very best. We know he is leaving the House as a parliamentarian, but will continue his fight for salmon. It is a testament to who this individual is by turning his life and dedication to fighting for fish and salmon and coastal communities.

I cannot say enough about this individual. We can all stand and applaud because I know everyone in the country is so lucky and fortunate to have leadership like the man from Port Moody—Coquitlam.

The Deputy Speaker: We will have a final word from the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Mr. Speaker, it truly has been an honour to serve.

I would like to thank the members for Courtenay—Alberni, Beaches—East York and Cariboo—Prince George for their very kind remarks. It has been a pleasure working with each of them. It has been a pleasure working with so many members across the aisle and in the House over the years. I think that is the important thing,

how we make good public policy decisions by coming together and doing the hard work of listening and working together to find solutions for Canadians. That is what it is all about.

In my 10 years as a member of Parliament, I have felt very honoured to be in this place. We are among the few people who can get here and have debates like this to move good legislation that is for the betterment of the entire country. I would not change it for the world.

I am definitely looking forward to spending my next chapter in life with my wife, Lynda, and working on my passion, which is the Fraser.

I wish everyone here all the best going forward, either in the next Parliament or wherever life may take them.

• (2325)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first I want to acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

I have a speech, but I think I will start by trying to answer questions and concerns that have been brought up. If I do that, then members could vote unanimously for this bill.

The first thing members have been asking is why there are only five more hours to debate this bill. For a lot of bills, that would be a valid question, but at this particular time we have had Conservative after Conservative getting up and not talking about the bill. We heard a lot about Bill C-48, Bill S-6, a letter from premiers not related to this bill, Bill C-15 and a northern moratorium.

I have been here awhile, and last night I witnessed an amazing situation. One of the Conservative speakers, in a 10-minute slot to speak on this bill, spent nine and a half minutes talking before they got to the bill, and then answering three questions by not referring to anything in the bill.

If the public wonders why Parliament has decided to call time allocation on this bill, it is obviously because the Conservatives have nothing more to say. We have heard the same arguments over and over again, and they are not valid. I will go through them one by one right now.

I am not sure why a party would want to stretch out a debate on a terrible injustice that it has caused, and it has done this a number of times. It is strange. Why would they want to put that in the light? Why would they not want to fix that injustice by supporting this bill? One of the members mentioned that he was not here at the time that it happened, so in good justice, he could support the bill.

People have asked what we have been doing for the last four years and why we did not debate this bill earlier. Some of the people in the House now have actually asked this question. This Liberal government has passed something like 85 bills. I think some members' constituents would like to ask them where they have been while these very important 85 bills were being discussed and debated.

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One bill in particular was in the exact same situation as this one. It was Bill C-17. Again, the previous government had unlawfully, either technically or in spirit, abrogated a modern treaty, a constitutionally protected treaty, and tried to pass a law that got around it. That was certainly disrespectful.

Some may ask why Liberals did not get more things done, and a good example was what happened when Bill C-17, related to the treaty, was ready to pass. There was a grand chief, chiefs and aboriginal people here in the galleries. It cost thousands of dollars for them to get here from the Yukon. What did the Conservatives do at that time? They called a dilatory motion that the next speaker be allowed to speak, and then the bill could not be done. Some members ask why things are not done, yet they continue to do tricks like that.

This particular bill broke a constitutionally protected treaty, as I said earlier, a land claim. The members opposite have asked—and it is a good question for the ones who were not here before—why Liberals voted for that bill. This question has been brought up a number of times. The reason is that the part of the bill in which the law was broken in spirit or in technicality was snuck in in a much larger devolution bill.

The devolution bill transferred the remaining federal powers to the territorial government. That was a tremendous move, and that is why the party supported that initiative. Unfortunately, even though the people affected by this wanted this taken out and some parliamentarians tried to get it out, the Conservatives pushed ahead with the bill, and that is why the other parties voted for it.

● (2330)

Another concern the Conservatives have noted a number of times is that there are two parts to the bill. I think the member for Northwest Territories corrected them and said there are three parts. Nevertheless, they said there is part 1 and part 2, and there was no consultation regarding part 2. That is not true at all. When we consulted, we consulted with all the local governments involved regarding the entire bill, both part 1 and part 2. Shortly, I will read to members some of the things they said, because the opposition has suggested they did not support both parts of the bill.

The bill concerns the Sahtu, the Gwich'in and the Tlicho. When the Tlicho signed its constitutionally protected land claim and its self-government agreement, I was parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Affairs. At that time, unfortunately, we had to fight against the Conservatives to get that agreement signed. At least the Conservatives can now make peace with that wrongdoing of the past and support the bill.

I will read some comments of support, because the Conservatives have said that indigenous groups did not support part 2 or the bill.

Grand Chief George Mackenzie, from the Tlicho Government, said, “We urge the community to move swiftly and decisively to ensure that Bill C-88 comes into force during the current session of Parliament.”

David Wright is legal counsel to the Gwich'in Tribal Council. I say to David, *drin gwiinzih shalakat*. He said the following at the INAN committee:

If Bill C-88 is not passed, not only will Canada not have fulfilled its commitment to Northwest Territories indigenous communities, but these communities will be forced back into time-consuming, expensive, acrimonious litigation, all adversely affecting that treaty relationship and the broader reconciliation project. Further, this would generate regulatory uncertainty that benefits no one....

I know the Conservatives have spoken against uncertainty in the past, so that is another reason for them to support the bill.

Premier McLeod and Grand Chief George Mackenzie, in a joint letter, said:

[W]e are hopeful that Bill C-88 will proceed expeditiously through the legislative process and receive Royal Assent [in this Parliament].... The negative implications of the status quo are significant.

Mervin Gruben was also quoted as supporting the bill, as well as Duane Smith from Inuvialuit. It was suggested he was not allowed to come to committee, but he was actually invited. He did provide a written submission, and it was nice to have that information added to the record.

A Conservative member talked about not listening to indigenous people and indigenous voices. The member said that not listening to the people of the north is arrogance. I just read that the four governments involved, the Sahtu, the Gwich'in, the Tlicho and the GNWT, all support the bill. Conservatives are right; we should listen to those people. They should listen to those people as well, along with the rest of the parties supporting the bill, and support the bill.

Another thing the Conservatives have talked about a lot is support for resource development. I am sure all other parties agree with sustainable development. It is another reason the Conservatives should vote for the bill. I will read some comments about how the bill promotes and ensures this.

Chief Alfonz Nitsiza, from the Tlicho Government, said:

[F]ailure to resolve this matter co-operatively would damage our treaty relationship and undermine the process of reconciliation as directed by the courts. Long-term regulatory uncertainty for any reason will damage the economy of the Northwest Territories, including within the Tlicho community. This is all avoidable with the passage of Bill C-88.

David Wright, legal counsel to the Gwich'in Tribal Council, said, “Bill C-88 is a step toward certainty in the Mackenzie Valley, and that is a step that should be taken at this time”.

● (2335)

Finally, Premier McLeod said:

The proposed amendments to the MVRMA in Bill C-88 would increase certainty around responsible resource development in the Northwest Territories. That certainty is something our territory needs as we continue to work with the indigenous governments in the territory to attract responsible resource development.

Conservatives, to be true to the values they so eloquently put forward on resource development, can support those values by supporting this bill.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

I support Bill C-88, an act to amend the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act. Although the debate so far has focused on the content of the proposed act, I want to talk about what is not in Bill C-88 and why it would be a mistake to make major amendments at this stage.

Amending Bill C-88 at this stage of the process would defeat its overall purpose, which is to resolve a court challenge arising from the previous government's decision to merge the land and water boards without holding appropriate consultations.

The Northwest Territories Devolution Act, Bill C-15, was assented to in March 2014. The act transferred the administration and control of public lands and waters to the Government of the Northwest Territories and amended the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. The act includes provisions restructuring the Mackenzie Valley land and water boards.

The Tlicho government and Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated challenged the changes to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act that would have dissolved their regional land and water boards. They argued that these changes violated their land claims agreements and infringed on the honour of the Crown. They added that the consultations had been inadequate. On February 27, 2015, the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories granted an injunction that suspended the proposed board restructuring, along with the coming into force of other regulatory amendments.

I would like to point out that those regulatory amendments, which included the addition of a regulation-making authority for cost recovery, administrative monetary penalties, development certificates and other provisions related to regional studies, all passed through the parliamentary process in 2014. Those same provisions are being presented today. However, they were rewritten to ensure that they could apply under the existing four-board structure. They were not part of the court challenge. Bill C-88 responds to the court challenge by reversing the provisions to merge the boards and re-introducing some regulatory elements that are applicable under the existing four-board structure.

On September 23, 2016, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations sent a letter to indigenous governments, organizations and stakeholders to launch the consultation process on Bill C-88.

● (2340)

Consultations were held with indigenous governments and organizations in the Mackenzie Valley, transboundary indigenous governments and organizations, resource co-management boards, organizations from the mining, oil and gas sectors, and the territorial government. To ensure that the indigenous governments and organizations were able to fully participate in the process, the Government of Canada provided funding to these groups and to the resource co-management boards that took part in the consultations.

Representatives from Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, or CIRNAC, held a teleconference with stakeholders to consider next steps and to discuss the consultation plan. A legislative proposal to repeal the board restructuring provisions was drafted and submitted to the groups for review. During the review period, the groups had the opportunity to meet with CIRNAC

representatives in Yellowknife to talk about the content of the proposal and to ask questions. This was also an opportunity for CIRNAC representatives to determine whether any part of the proposal was unclear or could be improved, based on the feedback they received.

[*English*]

I will not have time to finish, but I do not want to miss this particular point. The only other questions someone could ask that I have not already answered are whether the consultation that was done was serious and, although they were in agreement at the end, whether any changes were made. The answer is yes. I will give an example of two of the changes that were made.

The first was that because of the consultations with the people involved, a court jurisdiction related to a judicial review of administrative monetary penalties, AMPs, was modified in order to ensure consistency with the exclusive jurisdiction of the Northwest Territories Supreme Court under section 32 of the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act.

A second change was that consultation obligations related to the AMPs were added to the bill to ensure consistency with the comprehensive land claim agreements.

The only other thing I think someone might ask is related to the position of national interest and whether this is the only case of that. The answer is no; it is a clause, an idea, that comes up in different legislation. I will give members some examples from the north: the Mackenzie Valley Resource Act, Statutes of Canada 1998, chapter 25, section 130, and the Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act, Statutes of Canada 2013, chapter 14, section 2.

Section 94 of the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act provides for the federal minister to refer a proposed project to the Minister of Environment for the purpose of a joint review of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act if it is in the national interest to do so.

The Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act also provides for the responsible minister to reject a board decision or to reject or vary recommended terms or conditions if it is in the national interest to do so.

A few close references can also be found in section 51 of the Yukon Act, Statutes of Canada 2002, chapter 7, and in section 57 of the Northwest Territories Act, Statutes of Canada 2014, chapter 2, section 2.

● (2345)

To boil it all down, basically an act was passed that abrogated the land claim and went against a constitutionally protected law of Canada, which we cannot change by just doing another law. Of course, the court found that out and would not let it go ahead. All this bill would do is to put into law what the court had ordered.

Government Orders

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that Bill C-15, the bill the Liberals keep talking about that they claim was so wrong, is something that the Liberals actually voted for in the last Parliament.

However, my bigger issue is that clearly there was a challenge that needed to be addressed over the last few years. The member talked about how important it was for people to know what the situation was for resource development moving forward. However, it has taken them four years. We are in the last week of this Parliament, and all of a sudden they are rushing it through and suggesting that we are standing in the way.

Why was the bill not in this Parliament two years ago, in a timely way? Could the member explain that to his constituents, in terms of the members who say that it needs to move forward now? What will happen if it does not move forward? Why have the Liberals not brought the bill to the House until the very last minute?

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. She made two of the points that I had in my speech.

First of all, the member mentioned my constituents. The bill that relates to my constituents where the Conservatives have abrogated the land claim was passed a couple of years ago.

Then there are the 85 other good bills. I hope the member will go back and see all the good things that were done. I thank those members for asking these questions and saying all the good things we have done in four years with those 85 or so bills.

The second question she asked, and it has been mentioned a number of times, is why did the Liberals vote for it? I gave a whole paragraph in my speech as to why we voted for it. I was not there, but the Liberals did vote for it, and all the parties. The reason was that this part was snuck into a bill. The bill was very good and gave powers to the Northwest Territories that all the provinces in Canada had. It was generally a very good bill, but the Conservatives would not take out this bad part of the bill, the illegal part of the bill, and so we have had to take it out now.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about how important the bill is in relation to the 85 other important bills that the Liberals passed. I have to question him on that.

A couple of years ago, we got stuck debating, day after day, Bill C-24. The only purpose of Bill C-24 was to change the way that eight former ministers of state were paid, moving it out of the department operation fund into the consolidated fund. Therefore, I have to ask the member, why was that bill more important than the bill before us?

• (2350)

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the member asked that question, because he explained a very simple bill that the opposition spent all sorts of time on, and it slowed down the important bills.

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Yukon for his very good presentation on Bill C-88.

I want to ask the member about the unique co-management systems that we have in the north across the board, and why the co-management system for resource development is so important to us in the north. Could he elaborate on that a little bit?

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, the member is drawing to our attention how far forward first nations and governments in the Northwest Territories, Yukon and the north are because we have these co-management boards. On those boards, with good representation, are the indigenous governments, Inuit governments, the territorial governments and the federal government. In our particular case on the environmental assessment board, it is two, two and two. However, it is because everyone feels that they are part of it and has a say that we have been so successful in getting projects moved forward. They may not have been able to go forward in southern Canada as easily because they did not have buy-in from all the important groups.

The problem with the previous bill, in putting all of those boards into one big board, as someone referenced, is that the Tlicho would have had only one seat, instead of a significant portion of the board that affects their area. I know that everyone in this House wants governments affecting their area to have control. That is why I think that everyone in this House, if they want to respect the north and the local people, all of whom are in favour of this, should vote for the bill.

Mr. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I want to touch on an issue that comes mostly from industry. I meet quite often with the Chamber of Mines. It attends a lot of the round tables and has very strong opinions on resource development and the economy. So does the Chamber of Commerce. They always talk about the need to address a number of things if the north is going to become more economically secure.

The first thing is to address the issue of cost through infrastructure, mostly transportation infrastructure. The second thing is to sort out and resolve land tenure, compensation and self-governance with the indigenous people. They claim, and I agree with them, that certainty is a big issue and that we should not change the system we have. Everyone is comfortable and familiar with it.

Would the member agree that keeping the system, with the changes in Bill C-88, would give legal certainty to industry and all northerners, including the indigenous governments?

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, the member for Northwest Territories has worked so hard on this bill for his people.

Yes, regarding certainty, if we get this out of the courts, the illegal situation it is in, it would give certainty to development again. I think everyone in this House has spoken in favour of sustainable development.

Government Orders

Second, we do not have a choice. We have to make it legal again. Whether we want to or not, we have to. Third, that is why development has gone ahead so well. When indigenous peoples are involved with the territorial governments and the federal government as partners at the table, it removes a lot of roadblocks for sustainable development projects. There is great consultation with environmental groups as part of this. When everyone is involved, as the Chamber of Commerce has seen in the north, a lot of great projects go ahead. In Yukon, there is now a Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce. They all get along with the various stakeholders, and that is why the projects proceed so smoothly.

That is exactly right. We should leave it when it is working. Let us get it back to where it was negotiated. Some of the land claims took 30 years to negotiate.

• (2355)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, my first question is about the timeline for introducing this bill. I should also point to many bills that, according to my colleague, would not have priority. Here we are at the last minute on a bill that has been sitting for months and months because of the Liberals' lack of planning and determining that it is an emergency.

Having said that, the member talked about the importance of natural resource development and partnerships. How many bills has the government moved forward where indigenous consultation was completely lacking, such as when the Liberals put an arbitrary moratorium on tankers? We are seeing great concern from both premiers and indigenous communities across the country.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted when the indigenous affairs critic asks questions supporting things that were in my speech. All 86 bills are very important. The member for Northwest Territories already answered that question when he said that we have to rebuild the trust that was broken by the Conservatives.

The member also made the point I started out with, which is that all the Conservatives who have spoken to this bill have talked about other bills, other things not related to the bill. It is no wonder Parliament has put time allocation on this bill, when Conservatives repeat over and over again things that are not even related to the bill we are debating.

* * *

FISHERIES ACT

BILL C-68—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to consideration of certain amendments to Bill C-68, An Act to amend the Fisheries Act and other Acts in consequence.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

[*Translation*]

NOTICE OF CLOSURE MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): With respect to the consideration of the Senate amendments to Bill C-68, an act to amend the Fisheries Act and other acts in consequence, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the House, a minister of the Crown shall move, pursuant to Standing Order 57, that debate be not further adjourned.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: I am sure the House thanks the hon. government House leader for the notice pertaining to these two motions.

* * *

MACKENZIE VALLEY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-88, An Act to amend the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to speak to this bill.

I do not know if members have ever seen a hostage situation where the hostage makes a statement by video conference. We hear that statement and it is interesting because we know the person and that person would never make that statement otherwise. We kind of have that going on here.

We have heard the same statement read over and over again tonight. People say they support the bill. They say that there is a part of the bill that everybody in the Northwest Territories supports and there is a part of the bill that people do not. However, when they say they support it, the good outweighs the bad and therefore they support it.

One of part of the bill that does not fit with the rest is the fact that it would allow for a moratorium to be imposed from on high, from Ottawa, on the north. The moratorium was imposed without any consultation in the north whatsoever. What we have here is the Government of the Northwest Territories in this hostage situation where it either takes the bill or not. The Liberals ran around and got statements of support for the bill, despite there being a poison pill in it that people actually did not like.

When it comes to consultation, the Liberals, if it is to hold something back, if it is to ensure development does not happen, are entirely in favour of consultation. However, if it comes in a place where they are trying to hold something back unilaterally, then they do not have to do the consultation. In the case of putting in more regulations or preventing a pipeline from happening, then they need to have more consultation. However, if they are just going to unilaterally do something that is in that same vein, like a drilling moratorium, then they do not have to consult whatsoever.

Government Orders

It seems to me that the bill is entirely in keeping with the anti-energy agenda of the Liberal government. If it comes to getting a pipeline built, consult and consult. If it comes to imposing a drilling moratorium, or a tanker ban or a shipping ban, do not consult at all, just impose it from on high.

The government's anti-energy agenda is being portrayed loud and clear in Bill C-88. I find it completely disingenuous for the member for Yukon to say that the bill will help attract resource development in the territory. It will not do that whatsoever. He is correct when he says that it brings in regulatory certainty. It does bring in regulatory certainty. It will ensure that companies know that developing in the north sea is not allowed.

● (2400)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Peace River—Westlock will have about 17 minutes remaining in his time when the House next gets back to debate on the question.

It being 12 a.m., pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 28 and pursuant to Standing Order 24(1) the House stands adjourned until later this day at 2 p.m..

(The House adjourned at 12:01 a.m.)

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